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**DEBBIE
HARRY**

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

MÖTLEY CRÜE:
ASLEEP AT
THE WHEEL

'TIL TUESDAY
HARDCORE

CBGB'S

GINGER BAKER:
OLIVE TREES
AND ROCK

BORIS BECKER

TIPPER GORE'S DIARY

JEAN-LUC GODARD

THE
**10TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF PUNK**

WHERE HAVE ALL
THE PUNKS GONE?

HISTORY OF PUNK
CARTOON



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TOPSPIN Introductions 6

POINT BLANK Letters 8

FLASH

Chuck Chill-Out and Red Alert; Willie Dixon;
Moj Nixon; how to do the Doggy Style; Johnny
Rotten; Frank Zappa; Tates Noires; Ginger
Baker, World Beat, St. Vicious 10

TUESDAY'S CHILD

Not just another pretty blonde weirdo, 'til
tuesday's Aimee Mann is as full of grace as they
get. By Erica Bellina Wexler 22

SPINS Records 22

SINGLES 36

UNDERGROUND 36

DER KOMMISSAR

Everything you need to know about West
German tennis superstar Boris Becker during his
campaign for world domination. By Angela
Gaudioso 38

DEBBIE'S BACK

As this issue proves, blondes still have more fun.
In their first interview in several years, Debbie
Harry and Chris Stein discuss business,
fears, fantasies, wrestling, records, and an
extended vacation. By Glenn O'Brien 42

PUNK

From that first bleak winter of '76 till today, punk
rock—and now hardcore—has proven a haven
of mayhem for a generation of angry misfits.
By Legs McNeil 50

CBGB'S: SIGN OF THE TIMES

In 1973 Hilly Kristal opened a club in New York
City—and everybody came. By Jaanna Lisanti
and Annette Stark 61

GREAT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF PUNK

An illustrated scenario by John Holmstrom 63

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PUNKS GONE?

What's it to ya? By Scott Chrame and Punky
Egbert 67

STATE OF THE ART Cassettes 70

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Molley Crüe carries rock 'n' roll excess to its
painfully obvious conclusion.
By Sue Cummings 72

MOVING IMAGES

Cisco & Egbert ain't gonna play Sun City; Jean-
Luc Godard versus the Catholic Church 75

TIPPER GORE'S DIARY

Banning records is a nasty job, but somebody's
got to do it. By Jamie Malanowski 82

This One



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TOP SPIN

Who's Who, What's What, and Why

Punk, hmmm, let me look it up. It's not in the dictionary—that page has been eaten. Staff, as ever, are divided. Questioning of passersby in the street inconclusive—some miss the point and scream “Who are you calling punk?”, others hurry on, terrified to have been talked to this in New York. Some others just glare and spit forcefully on pavement. I suspect they know more.

This is the 10th anniversary of punk, and to my reckoning that has to be one of the most amazing statistics in the history of man. By staying intact long enough to have a milestone attached to it, punk has been sucked into what must be, for it, a living death: establishment.

Johnny Rotten—or Mr. Lydon, or whatever the hell your real name is, I suppose only American Express knows for sure (what a great ad that would make!)—“Allo, Do you know me?”—gob—“when I’m not trawling up in airports or”—hback—“scuse me, shouting on records viv Afrika Bambaataa, to look ‘p, I use the

American Express Card, dun ‘it”—anyway, Johnny, you let us down. How could you let punk get eaten? There has been a terrible mistake, a bureaucratic oversight. Punk was supposed to live incredibly fast, die young, and leave a beautiful stain. It forgot to die.

In a perfect world, rock could be what punk is—pure energy and rather direct communication. Whether you like all or some or none of the music is irrelevant. It has had more social impact than anything in music since the Beatles. Punk was an explosion in 1976. So destructive it was creative. It ripped a great gaping hole in our rather boring cultural fabric, allowing anything that could get through to do so, and almost everything did. It was a renaissance—not as pretty and gentle and generally well received as you might expect renaissances to be, but none the less.

So punk has accumulated 10 years of existence, which is not bad, just ironic, because the thing that makes it so exciting is its ephemerality. Punk



Jim Kravitz



Randy Meyer



John Holmstrom



Steve Mey

is the only nitrate of music. Punk songs are born obsolete. Each hurries itself out of the way for the next, as if recognizing that if it can be said, it must already be redundant. Punk music seems to evaporate upon contact, like ether. Punk leaves you no prisoners to take.

In this issue we publish a reading of the honor roll, “Where Have All the Punks Gone?” (page 67); Legs McNeil’s search for the hardcore generation (titled, imaginatively enough, “Punk,” page 50); John Holmstrom’s comprehensive cartoon, “History of Punk” (page 63), and a gem of a piece about CBGB’s (page 61).

Glenn O’Brien interviewed Debbie Harry and Chris Stein in “Debbie’s Back” (page 42), in which the two of them explained their long hibernation. Debbie will soon release a new solo album on the Geffen label.

Sue Cummings interviewed some of Mötley Crüe—Nikki Sixx and manager Doug Thaler—and many people connected with the group or with Vince Neil’s drunken driving accident in which the Hanoi Rocks drummer was killed and two other people seriously injured. The Crüe did not want to be interviewed or written about by us. That’s too bad. “Asleep at the Wheel” (page 72) shows why.

Finally, I’m proud to say we’ve recently won our first award: Best Consumer Magazine from CMJ (Collegiate Media Journal). Votes were cast by commercial and college radio stations, record stores, concert clubs,

and other people connected with the music industry. We won as a write-in. Thanks again, everyone who voted for us. That was very special.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

Top: Boris Becker. **Someday** soon, the whole tennis world will be his. **Above left:** CMJ’s New Music Award, presented to us in the category of Best Consumer Magazine. **Above right:** John Holmstrom’s self portrait. **Left:** One of hardcore’s best bands, Agnostic Front. **From left to right:** Roger, Vinnie Stigma; Mark; and Billy Psycho.

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POINT BLANK

Letters

Edited by Karen Dolan

Bruce Springsteen

Our very own John Leland, late but better than never, weasels his way into the Springsteen debate ("The Meaning of Bruce," November, p. 44):

Dear SPIN:

I know no one asked me, but I too have a few words to speak about the meaning of Bruce. The following is a *sorta* true story.

It's September 18, 1984. I'm sitting at home, browsing avidly through *Chandler Brossard's Who Walk in Darkness* and blasing the paint off the walls with the amazing Die Kreuzen album. Suddenly, the phone rings. I turn down the stereo and grunt into it.

"Mr. Lehman?"

"Uh, Leland, yeah."
"Mr. Leibowitz, my name is Herb Winkelman, junior assistant undersecretary for public relations at the White House, and I think you should know that the President is a big fan of your work. He needs your review of *We're the Meatmen*... and *You Suck!* in *Trouser Press* was a message of hope from a man so many young Americans admire, and that your band, *Sperm Blast*, embodies our great national values of courage and perseverance. I speak for the President when I say that in you, New Jersey has a native son she can be proud of."

"Um, I think my water's boiling..."
"Erroy, the President will be campaigning in New Jersey tomorrow, and he'd like you to make the gig. We have your tax reports. How 'bout it?"

"Look, Winkelman," I said, "if that reactionary pig so much as mentions my initials in his campaign for world destruction, I'll libel his fascist ass in some of the most powerful tanzines in this country and denounce him from the stage of every *Die Sperm Blast* plays. And my name is Leland."

"I'm sorry you feel that way, Mr. Lauteuc. You wouldn't happen to know another major artist from New Jersey who wouldn't say anything if we used his name to get over, would you?"

And that's how I almost became famous.

PS.: Critics who didn't grow up in

New Jersey for some reason assume Bruce presents Asbury Park as the booby prize of the disenfranchised working class (DWC), a joyless wasteland that embodies the failure of the American Dream. Whereas if you grew up in New Jersey, furiously waiting for school to let out so you could do nothing on those impossibly long June afternoons, you know Asbury Park symbolized a magical escape. It was Valhalla on the Garden State Parkway, a place where you could eat disgusting food, see and maybe even talk to girls in bikinis, blast your radio, get a tan, throw baseballs at metal milk bottles, and buy almost any kind of Grateful Dead T-shirt. Without anybody hassling you. Asbury Park was cool.

John Leland
Brooklyn, NY

Thank you for the essays on Bruce Springsteen—all of them. I, for one, believe in Bruce Springsteen. If Bruce lived in my hometown, he would be my friend. I believe that when he wrote "Factory," he knew my Daddy woke up at 5 AM, packed his lunch, and went to work in the cotton mill across the street. Even though he is a wealthy man, Springsteen still knows how I felt growing up with a gas station in my backyard and a railroad track on either side of my house. I believe that is just a little of what's important about Bruce Springsteen.

Nancy Rodden
Charleston, SC

Models and rock stars

Your article on rock stars and models (October, p. 58) was nauseatingly crass. Models are enough of a blight on the landscape of rock 'n' roll without such congratulatory media attention. Well, we all have our peccadilloes, and going out with models is just another one of the many bad habits a lot of rock stars have picked up over the years. At least

Baby, we were born to run off at the mouth about Bruce (right).

Bryan Ferry had the grace and good sense to kick the habit.
Luciana Valenti Darwyn
New York, NY

Yngwie Malmsteen

Malmsteen's comparison of himself to the likes of Paganini and Bach (Flash, November, p. 18) is totally preposterous. Unlike Malmsteen, these two men had very few peers and musically were exceptional. I've seen 16-year-olds who could copy some of Malmsteen's solos. Don't get me wrong, I like the guy's playing. It's just too bad that his achievements have to be overshadowed by thoughtless remarks and a conceited attitude.

Raymond Taylor
Baton Rouge, LA

The Meatmen

Here I be, Tesco Vee, stuck in a \$100-a-night hotel in Dallas, and alas, on the tiny newsstand the yuppie messiah sweetly glares back from the new issue of SPIN—that sorta left-wing, sorta estab rag. Little be it for an artiste such as meself to get defensive and such at Mr. Leland's platter pomposity (Spins, November, p. 31). But John baby, your rampanti, inaccurate gaffe is downright slanderous. Ten thousand platters in five months, and all of a sudden the Meatmen ain't so downright indie anymore! Our gay audience (you heard me) doesn't appreciate your

stereotypical assertions. But don't get me wrong, masters of free-thinkin' press—between Hank Rollins and the great features, I be jammin' on yo' rag!
Tesco Vee of the Meatmen
Washington, D.C.

Henry Rollins

I was interested to read Henry Rollins's piece on his favorite albums (November, p. 82). I have long held the view that those fortunate who discovered the Velvet's "Sister Ray" are a unique and special bunch. I was lucky. I discovered *White Light/White Heat* and *Fun House* as an English teenager in 1974. Without that introduction I probably would not have taken part in one of the greatest times in rock music, the punk explosion in England in 1976-77.

Richard Keeling
St. Louis, MO

Henry Rollins was very honest to admit that the first time he heard *Fun House* was in 1980! What in the world was he listening to before that?

Peter Zazemba
Cutting Edge, Fleishones, etc.
(in transit)

Corrections

That's 6-year-old Dorian standing next to his father, Rudy Langran, on p. 6 of the December issue.

Monica Doe took the photo of Sammy Hagar on p. 10 of the December issue.



John Leland



"I could go for something Gordon's"

The possibilities are endless



FLASH

Edited by Scott Cohen and Glenn O'Brien

Chuck Chill-Out and Red Alert; Willie Dixon; Mojo Nixon; Doggy Style; Johnny Rotten; Frank Zappa; Têtes Noires; Ginger Baker; World Beat; St. Vicious

Chuck Chill-Out and Red Alert sound like a new ground-meat dish and an imminent disaster.

In New York and as far away as London they are known as the hippest and hottest radio master-mix disc jockeys.

Chuck Chill-Out (Charles Turner) from the Bronx, home of hip hop, and Red Alert (Fred Crute) from Harlem, began scratching and mixing 10 years ago. Learning their craft along with pioneering greats Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa, they played neighborhood houses and block parties. Like most street disc jockeys, their fame spread by word of mouth.

Red, whose tag comes from his naturally blazing red hair, started playing at the Roxy in New York, where he was sought by WRKS-FM program director Tony Quatarone to make dance party tapes for the station. Chuck got his break after Quatarone was impressed by his scratching technique on the popular underground record "Cuttin' Herbie."

That was two years ago. Since then their shows have become the most progressive and avant-garde dance parties on New York radio. "People use to go to the clubs to hear new music, but not anymore," remarks Quatarone. "Most clubs rejected rap music as well as the scratching technique. So now if a person wants to hear new music they have to turn on to the dance party shows on weekends."

Chuck and Red's shows combine the kind of new and progressive music that normally would not get airplay with current and old hits. Some of the records introduced on their shows have gone on to become radio hits. Both DJs have been responsible for breaking records such as Doug E. Fresh's "The Original Human Beatbox," LL Cool J's "I Need a Beat," "Hip Hop On Wax (I and II)," U.T.F.O.'s "Roxanne, Roxanne," and "Rappin' Duke."

Chuck and Red have separate shows on alternate weekends, and both are known

by their distinctive show openers. Red's is a screeching siren while Chuck's is a record that chants his name behind a def scratch.

Besides having finely tuned "street ears," which they attribute to gut feelings about music and keeping an open ear to the street, the two DJs also analyze the station's request lines to keep a constant tap on their audience's tastes. "I get my inspiration from the audience because I'm around them all the time," says Red.

Although there are millions of street DJs who could have been in their places, both DJs wouldn't have been able to match Red and Chuck's keen ability to please hip hop audiences without alienating the pop audience.

Their tapes have been requested by stars such as Ashford and Simpson and Warren Beatty. "Yeah, Warren Beatty asked for my tapes," states Chuck nonchalantly. "He called up the station looking for me. He said he just wanted them for personal use."

But with all of this sudden fame they've managed to maintain a homeboy attitude due to the anonymity that radio allows. While most artists yearn to be recognized on the street, they seem to revel in their ability to walk around incognito. "When I walk by and hear my tapes playing I laugh, but it's a good feeling," says Red.

Besides wielding their influence on the airwaves, they also work with various recording artists. Red tours the country and Europe as rapper Sparky Dee's DJ, while Chuck obliges requests to perform his scratching and mixing feats. Both Red and Chuck worked on Run-DMC's gold album *King of Rock* as well as on various other rap records.

"Rap is selling records," adds Chuck. "You got gold albums selling 500,000 to 600,000 records. You can't ignore that."

—Judy Hutson



Above: deejays Chuck Chill-Out and Red Alert at home in their living room; near right: Frank Zappa, Mother of his country; far right: the Têtes Noires showing off their namesake.

Mothers of Prevention

Zappa has blown it again. He's probably shattered all his respectability with his new album *Frank Zappa vs. the Mothers of Prevention*—mainly because of a track on it called "Porn Wars," a musique concrète number that features as guest artists no less than Senators John Danforth (R-MO), Albert Gore, Jr. (D-TN), Ernest "Fritz" Hollings (D-SC), Paula Hawkins (R-FL), James Exon (D-NE), Paul Trible (R-VA), Slade Gorton (R-WA), and Jeff Ling, a minister and consultant to the Parents' Music Resource Center.

Frank has taken their granite words uttered during a Senate hearing on "porn rock" this past September, and bent them to his will. He took key words and phrases, programmed them into his synthesizer, then weaved them against a backdrop of ominous

electronic noises, cosmic hog snorts, and a drum track. Interspersed in this aural soup are a couple of snippets left over from Frank's 1968 ballet, *Lumpy Gravy*, and a brief monologue by Zappa's "Thing-Fish" character. The *Lumpy Gravy* quote: "This must be the end of the world / All the people turning into pigs and ponies / I can't let it happen to me."

Among recurrent motifs: —Hawkins chanting, "Burn! Burn! Burn!" and the phrase "fire and chains and other objectionable tools of

gratification in some twisted minds."

—Trible quacking, "Rape!"

—Hollings intoning, "Maybe I could make a good rock star," "outrageous filth," and "pone rock."

—Ling quoting lyrics from "Golden Showers" by the

Mentors, including "I will drive my love inside you," and the now immortal "bend up and smell my anal vapors."

Frank's exchanges with Hawkins over what kinds of toys the Zappa kiddies play with is also included, as is Gore's unctuous compliment to Zappa: "I respect you as a true original. . . ." This is followed by Hollings chattering like Abbie Hoffman, and Simon, "Maybe I could make a good rock star." Gorton's denunciation of poor old Frank is here, too, punctuated by ungodly snorts.

Frank took the people who don't like to hear nasty things said on pop LPs—and made them say nasty things on a pop LP! The voices range in tone from lowland gorilla to mega-chimpunk to mosquito.

Why'da do it, Frank?

"I thought they needed to have something nice in their stockings for Christmas."

Aw, come on. . . .

"You testify before one of those Senate hearings and see how arrogant those bastards are, and what relative position they think they hold in the universe. They have blown themselves out of all proportion to reality. There are a couple that are OK. I thought Exon was OK, a rational guy."

But, but.

"There's no way that I could have just walked away from Washington, D.C. and laughed it all off. It's too depressing."

"Porn Wars" ends with a remark Hollings apparently intended as an aside: "We haven't got 'em whipped on this one yet. We've got a bear by the tail here. Jesus."

Zappa, who is on a media campaign against censorship of rock albums, is also working on a video documentary about the problem. Possible title: "Congress Eats the Young."

—Rip Rense

Yakety Yak

Eddie Van Halen's a lot like me in that he doesn't have a lot of friends either. And we're both extremists—both disappear from the face of the earth to do our thing: me with weights, him to write songs. We're the only people who understand why we gotta do that.

—Mark Gasteau of the N.Y. Jets



Têtes Noires is French for blackheads.

The band is named for their hair color, not complexion problems.

The six-woman band was started as a one-shot performance-art project in Minneapolis, by leader and former Miss South Dakota Jennifer Holt.

Because of the subjects they tackle, which include gay male prostitution, Moonies, wet T-shirt contests, and sex and class, the Têtes are often branded feminists, but that hasn't stopped them from doing such things as donning raggedy lingerie, hair curlers, and fluffy slippers and booking themselves into a club as "Insanity 6" to spoof another hometown combo they disdain.

No matter what you call them, their mockery, politics, and stage antics are anchored by credible clypeo, heavy metal (they do a Motorhead cover), hardcore, Dixieland, Farisa pop, and their forte, six-part a cappella harmonies.

The band is a self-managed collective; each member is in charge of an area of the business. Holt and Camille Gage, who sing up front, handle public relations, while guitarist and ex-accountant Polly Alexander, who looks like June Cleaver with a Strat, takes care of finances. Bassist Cynthia Bartell is in charge of distribution and promotion of their records. Singer/percussionist Renee Kayon, an art student, oversees graphics, and keyboardist Angela Frucci tends the truck that transports the women and their gear on tour.

Jennifer: "I went out for the Miss South Dakota pageant for the wrong reasons. I entered it for money. I

desperately needed it for college. I was miserable the whole year, but I don't regret it because I learned what I didn't want to be like. I broke away from that all at once; I stopped shaving my legs and worrying about my weight."

Cynthia: "It's really an awkward time right now for women musicians. There are these two extremes. You can be a sex object or in a feminist band. I can see why people are attracted to Madonna, but at the same time I think she's just living up to that stigma surrounding women entertainers—that they have to sell themselves as sex objects—so I think she's a real throwback to the '50s mentality."

Camille: "It's really discouraging that, say, every time you pick up an article on Alison Moyet, they have to mention that she's a big woman. It shouldn't matter. I think it's OK for women to look sexy, but if you look too sexy, that's all people will talk about. I read a magazine article that said that if Madonna couldn't be sexy, then women still are not free. If you have to dress funny and look weird, you're still being put into a mold. I think Cyndi Lauper has a comforting image. She can be an oddball and she's not a raving beauty, but she's successful. It's okay for women to look and dress nice, and it doesn't mean you're a feminist just because you don't want to wear makeup. I think everybody should have the freedom to look the way they want, whether it's like Madonna or Ferron."

—Susan Borey





David Goby

Reagan rejects blues lesson—blues singer rejects Reagan links

Blues music in America has never had a more vigorous exponent than Willie Dixon, 73, author of such classics as "I Can't Quit You Baby," "Back Door Man," "I Just Want to Make Love to You," and "Hoochie Coochie Man."

"The blues," Willie said recently, "is nothing but the facts of life as told through words, inspiration, and song."

One of Dixon's newer songs is called "You Can't Make Peace." "Man can make all kinds of things," says Dixon, "He can make things undreamed of before. But he can't make peace. Peace just got to be."

Dixon attempted to share this insight with President Reagan. In 1981 the bluesman sent Reagan a special 7" pressing of "You Can't Make Peace." On the flip side was another pointedly topical song called "It's In the News (Everybody's Got the Blues)."

Did Reagan ever listen to the disc?

"No, I don't think so," Dixon said.

In fact, Dixon didn't receive any response from the White House until a few months later when a Presidential aide appeared backstage at one of Willie's gigs to offer the singer a pair of Presidential cuff links.

Although he's not particularly fond of playing nightclubs anymore, Dixon continues to tour because he's a ceaseless promoter of the blues. His respect for blues music runs so deep, in fact, that he has created an organization to preserve, protect, and promote blues music and musicians called the Blues Heaven Foundation. The idea for a blues preservation movement occurred to Dixon as a result of conversations he had with other blues musicians. He and Muddy Waters, especially, discussed the necessity for creating a means to advance blues artists.

Dixon doesn't begrudge rock 'n' rollers who have derived their styles from the blues their success.

Indeed that would be awkward for someone whose innovative arrangements of blues rhythms helped catalyze the development of rock 'n' roll in the '50s. But Dixon does regret the fact that blues artists are almost categorically denied recognition of their roots standing and credit for their ongoing contributions.

There is no bitterness on his part, though, only determination. "You don't get mad," says Dixon, "You get smart, and try to do something about the problem."

In fact, Dixon claims his biggest songs "Haven't even come out of the drawer yet."

Neither have the cuff links.

—Wayne Cresser



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Mojo Nixon is working

Mojo Nixon is like: John Lee Hooker playing Woody Guthrie in a skiffle band, or Mr. Greenjeans meets Richard Pryor at a revival meeting, or . . . well, the act is unique. There's Mojo Nixon himself on electric guitar and frantic vocals, one foot stompin' on a wooden plank he calls his "hoaling board." His bohemian sidekick Skid Roper is the percussion section, with a washboard attached to a shovel handle, beat up with a wire brush. Songs like "Mushroom Maniac," "Jesus at McDonald's at Midnight," and "The Art Fag Shuffle" spew forth from this twosome and somehow the sound is wholly appropriate.

Asked to recount their origin, Mojo spun a wild tale. "On a cross-country bicycle trip from Virginia to California, me and two friends were in the French Quarter of New Orleans drinkin' this murky green drink called 'Skylab Fallout.' My friend Bobby was in orbit, passed out, so me and Jesse got walkin' down the street offerin' airplane spins for a dollar to anyone who was game. Finally, after no one was buyin' airplane spins for a whole lotta blocks, we came up against this guy with a goatee and wearing a monocle who says he'd like to take one airplane spin. He flips me a silver dollar, 1907, and tells me it was formerly owned by bluesman Charlie Patton." So at midnight on Rampart Street in New Orleans, the meeting of Mojo Nixon and Skid Roper took place.

It wasn't until a few years later that the two would meet again in a bar in Tijuana and discover they shared many musical interests. Mojo asked Skid if he would accompany him on snare drum at his next gig. Skid replied that he had sold his drums to one Country Dick Montana (now with the Beat Farmers), but he might sound good on washboard.

"Startin' out in San Diego, we played a whole mess of places," Mojo explains. "We played some parties, got beatin', even practiced a few times at Skid's house! For a long time we played every Thursday at Bodie's world famous dive bar. I remember one particularly wild night there when three former girlfriends showed up at the same time. One of them was beatin' on my car with her shoes; another had run into a car in the parking lot, hid from the cops when they came,

and then denied everything; and the third later was dancin' with me to the Struggle Bunnies, but threw me down on the floor and started kickin' me."

Asked about his first remembrances as a kid in the deep south, Mojo replies, "We had a dog named ol' Flint. Best dog that ever lived. When Mama had people over, Flint would do his dog thing, draggin' his butt on the ground 'cause he had worms. Drove my Mama crazy. He got shot a couple of times and run over, too, but he was too ornery to die."

Mojo Nixon's musical background: "When I was about 13, I saw an ad in the local paper for a drum set. I was just itchin' to get some drums, so my father drives us way out on the edge of town to this old shack. Inside was an old, blind, black lady whose son had joined the navy so she sold us the whole kit for \$18! I knew her son was gonna be mad when he found out, but my daddy bought it, and we took it home. There was a bass drum, snare and stand, tom-tom, and one cymbal attached to the bass. Later I bought a high hat from J.C. Penney's with money I had saved from working for them putting bicycles together before Christmas. So I bashed and crashed along with records for a few years before discovering guitar."

Within a year after picking up the guitar, Mojo was playing in a bassard folk group called Gordzilla's Revenge, before graduating to dirt hippie music and hard rock.

One big influence on teenage Mojo was the fact that his father ran a soul radio station (WILA, Danville, VA) during the zenith years of soul. As Mojo tells it, "I remember James Brown throwing out red clip-on ties to an audience in pandemonium. After tossing out a bunch one at a time, Soul Brother Number One finally took a whole box of red ties and dumped them all out into the audience who by now were in a complete frenzy."

Somehow, the subject of parental discipline came up. "One time after my brother had done something bad, my daddy handcuffed him to the lawn mower and told him to holler when he was through! So my brother's hollerin' away and daddy pretends he can't hear him 'cause he's listening to the stock car races on the radio.



"The only thing my daddy hated more than us ditchin' school was messing up mowing the lawn. He'd get upset if you didn't get up to the bushes just right."

"Once, we got yard of the month from the city beautification committee. It was in the paper and we got a plaque from the mayor that my dad carried with him all the time. After that, if we didn't mow the lawn right, he'd tan our hides with the plaque."

Is there a Mojo Nixon musical philosophy? "Music should have a strong melody, a good beat, be funny or sad, tell a story, it shouldn't slavishly imitate the past, it shouldn't try to sound like everything else, it should make use of your own concepts, be entertaining, spiritual, and make you feel good, and somehow combine most of these things and bring them all together."

What's in the future for Mojo and Skid? "We want to go out on tour and play every club, hall, and bar around just so long as we can gas up the car and get a few dollars. I want to spread the Mojo word, tour the world, make another album, create pandemonium, read some good books, hear some good bands, cohabitate with some good women, and not mow the lawn. That would make me happy. Come to think of it, I'm happy right now."

—Richard Banke

Above: Mojo Nixon, who once earned a 1907 silver dollar formerly owned by bluesman Charlie Patton; right: farmer Johnny Lydon.

Exclusive interview with Johnny Rotten

"Hello, John?"

"Yeah."

"I'm calling from SPIN magazine. Can I ask you a few questions about . . ."

"Fuck off!"

Click.

—Sue Cummings



THE NINE

A CHORUS LINE



Photo: Marvin Sussman/Photo

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Donny the Punk

How to dance, part three

Doggy Style, the ballsiest of the new punk bands, whose big hit is "Donut Shop Rock," has come up with not only catchy, bubble-gum punk but also the first new punk dance step since 1980—the Doggy Style Hop.

"It's the new dance craze that's sweeping the nation, and it started at the Flashdance Club in Anaheim," says lead singer Brad Xavier.

"It's just like the bunny hop, only you arch your back a little bit more and grab your partner by the waist and you just get off and hop around. It's a big old chain. We've created lines of two or three hundred people. Imagine that many pouches in heat!"

The Doggy Style Hop is not a religious gesture, the band assures us. It's just a fun-filled activity. It says, "Make love, not war."

These freethinking innovators have also developed a theme to go along with their new dance—"spontaneity."

"Spontaneity is not just physical, but mental and philosophical as well. Nudity is an expression of freedom. It's the most natural form of human life," says Brad. "I wasn't born with a leather jacket on. We're brought up to believe we have to keep our diapers on. We peel off our threads and just flow with things. Let it all hang out!"

The band, who have recorded nude and lost their clothes at many a hot California show, once had five naked guys come on before they played. On their bare cheeks were the words "DOGGY STYLE."

The band's parting message: "If you're walking down the street someday, and a group of guys happen to bark out the windows of their car, or their subway, or airplane, or whatever the case may be, and they blurt out the question, 'How are you gonna do it?' hopefully the answer will be: 'DOGGY STYLE!'"

—Donny the Punk

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"Come With Me On a Journey Beneath the Skin"

THE WATERBOYS: THIS IS THE SEA



Photo by [unreadable]

The Ginger Baker Challenge

What the hell was drummer Ginger Baker doing in New York? Hanging out with the Celluloid Records central committee, of course, and laying down tracks for future feats of genetic engineering by producer-to-the-stars Bill Laswell. While nothing specific about their secret projects can be revealed at this point in time, it was a pleasant surprise to find the copper-haired percussionist looking hale and hearty and sounding as cranky as ever. When we spoke, Baker was killing time at Laswell's place before catching a plane for Japan, where they were recording was scheduled. Shucks, we'd almost given you up for gone, Ginger. Where've you been keeping your percussive self?

Some four years ago I opted out of society. I moved to Italy, started farming olives, and really divorced myself from the world entirely. Right now I don't watch television or read newspapers. I just concentrate on my animals and my farm. It's done me a world of good. I can say that I am healthier now than I was 20 years ago. The only habit I have is smoking. I don't drink. I don't do...

While hep-cat high-school students still plug quarters into pizza-parlor jukeboxes to hear Cream's "White Room," Baker has always claimed that both Cream and spin-off supergroup Blind Faith were jazz bands that only accidentally appealed to a wide audience. Not only did Baker display the bebop chops you'd expect from a lifelong

devotee of Baby Dudd, he was into Afro a long before Afro was cool. As Baker notes, "It seems to have become a big deal 15 years after we were doing it."

Laswell's invitation to play apparently returned Baker to his drum kit after a lengthy hiatus prompted by his second divorce and the worst winter for olives in recorded history. How did Baker end up in Italy in the first place?

"It reached the point where I had to pay an awful lot of money for the privilege of living in the country my father and uncles all died for. They imagined that I owed the government a lot of money, but I refused to pay it. I will never pay that money and I will never go to England again. If they offer me fucking £20 million for a concert I'll tell 'em to stuff it up their ass."

And what if Baker were offered, say, £20 million to crank out "Sunshine of Your Love" one more time with Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce, à la Led Zepplin?

"I watched the so-called Led Zepplin reunion on the air and I've never heard such a lot of fucking rubbish in my life. That's what happened to Cream, and I don't ever want to get into that position again, where you walk onstage and people cheer even if it's fucking awful just because of who you are."

So the chances of the three of you getting...

"There is absolutely no chance, because under no circumstances will I ever do it. Ever. I tried once and that's

it, finished, no more. It was my hand; I formed the fucking thing and got less out of it than Eric and Jack, and that's it. There was a period where I really needed the money and went to see Eric and asked him. That's when I got all that about, 'Oh, where's your chops, mate?' Huh, he's only where he is because of me. So is Jack, but they don't seem to remember that. Well, fuck 'em. I mean, I'm quite friendly with both of them and I know who I am, but I don't think they do."

Well, just what exactly is the state of those fabled rolls and perididdles?

"I'm coming back. I'm gonna show everybody, some of my friends included—and please write this [no problem, sir]—that my chops have never been fucked and never will be. Just tell people to come and fucking hear me and then come and fucking tell me you can play better than me, any fucking drummer in this country or in the world. And that's a fucking challenge. I'll play the balls off anybody."

And he means it.

—Richard Gehl

Above left: Ginger Baker at his olive farm in Italy, challenging the world to a duel with drumsticks; above right: Jimmy Cliff, the first international reggae superstar and an integral part of Jamaica's Mt. Rushmore; above, far right: he may be dead, but Sid Vicious won't miss this New Year's bash.

World Beat

Jonathan Demme, of *Stop Making Sense* fame, has tapped Nigerian juju star Ebenezer Obey for his next feature film. Obey recently completed a widely heralded debut tour of America and promises to return here next April with 25 music fans, including six talking drummers... Mutsaers, the reggae dub poet who neither smokes nor drinks, is about to open a health food store in Kingston called Food for Life. The all-temale dub poets album he produced will be out in January from Heartbeat... Jimmy Cliff is another who has eschewed the use of the both recently. "It was harming my voice. Now it's stronger than ever since I stopped smoking," Harold Ramus' new film *Libi Paradise* in which Cliff co-stars with

He retired in the early '70s, but was just preparing a comeback, having made a reported 12 new LPs for the Afro a New Sound Label... King Sunny Adé's next tour is now scheduled for spring at the earliest... One of the collector's items of the year has just been released by Rika Marley Music. It's a picture disc 7" of Marcia Griffiths' composition about Bob Marley, called "He's a Legend," sung by the I-Threes. The A-side has a shot of the four of them together, while the flip presents a unique profile view of the Reggae King. It's an extremely limited pressing, and well worth seeking out at music shops... A spirited but melancholy tour is currently on the road featuring sax king Toots Hibbert and the ailing



Photo by [unreadable]

Robin Williams and Peter O'Toole, opens at the end of March. Meanwhile, "Bongo Man," his second film, has just been released on video cassette... Bob Geldof told me that there wasn't a reggae band big enough to perform at Live Aid. That is why I called it Live Aid. Is that why I called it Live Aid? No. Spoke Steel Pulse's leader, David Hinds, He makes a good point. It unknowns like the Beatles could find a spot, why not the black reggae and Afro bands who have been singing about these problems for decades... Zane's pioneering Dr. No (Nicolas Kessanda) is due out at 31... The guitarist began his career in 1953 with the Afro in jazz Orchestra and in the early '60s gave Tabu Ley Rochereau his first break as a vocal list.

Yellowman. Rumors of all health continue to dog the albino toaster, and there has been a general air of "farewell show" to the events. Toots continues to be without a label, a major disappointment to reggae fans worldwide, especially since the album that he's had in the can for three years is one of the best works he's ever created, with red-hot ruckers like "Jah Bad," "I Feel the Vibes," and "Enough is Enough." Isn't there anyone out there smart enough to sign this thing legend?... Are the Melody Makers, currently No. 1 on the U.S. reggae charts, about to re-sign with EMI America after all? Rumors abound at press time... Till such time, Jah Love, everyone

—Roger Steffen



Bobbie Graham

A Visit From Saint Vicious

'Twas the night before New Year's, when everyone's drunk,
Not a rocker was stirring, not even a punk;
The baggies were hung by the phono with care
In hopes that Saint Vicious, yes Sid, would be there:
The Ramones were sold-out, so we stayed in our sheds,
While visions of slammers still danced in our heads;
Suzie with hash pipe and I, dressed in black,
Had just settled down for a long-playing track
When out in the alley there arose such a clatter
I crawled from the couch to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I lurched with a crash,
Tearing a poster I'd had from the Clash.
The strobe light, the acid, and new-smoked snow
Gave a luster of Day-Glo to objects below;
When what to my unfocused eyes should appear
But a miniature stage, and a band I could hear,
With a singer who danced; by the poigo he did
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Sid.
More rapid than Springfield, their rhythm it came;
And he snarled, and shouted, and called them by name: "Now
Strummer! Biatra! Now Joey Ramone!
On Bators! On Patti! On Cook and on Jones—
To the top of the amps, kick over the wall!
Now anarchy, anarchy, anarchy all!"
As punks that before a rock concert got high,
When they all start to poigo, mount to the sky,
So up to the window, the rockers, they flew
With powerful speakers, and Saint Vicious, too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the trunk
The swearing and cursing of each famous punk.
As I drew on my pipe, and was turning around,
Down the vent shaft Saint Vicious, he came with a bound;
He was dressed all in black from his head to his toe;
And a chain ran from shoulder to regions below.
A black leather jacket was flung on his back,
And he looked like a heretic freed from the rack.
His eyes, how they flashed! His smile, how merry!
He staggered right in, and his breath smelled of sherry;
His darkly blue hair was drawn up in a spike;
And the rest of the punks were attired alike.
A portable mike he held tight in his hand;
"Holiday in the Sun" issued forth from the band,
To be followed by "Anarchy in the U.K.,"
"God Save the Queen," "I Wanna Be Like You,"
The band played so loud, albums fell from my shelf,
And I gasped when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye, and some dope for my head
Soon gave me to know I should poigo instead.
He spoke but a word, and that was "Ramones,"
And gave us all tickets, and hash for the day!
Then putting white powder inside of his nose
And, spitting it out, he said: "Fuck all disco!"
He sprang to his stage, to the band gave a shout,
And away they all jammed, 'til Saint Vicious passed out;
But I heard him exclaim, with the last of his might, "SCORCHING
PUNK ROCK TO ALL, AND TOO AW-UL GOOD NIGHT!"

—Dante the Punk (with no apologies to Clement Moore)

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"Come
With Me
On a Journey
Beneath the Skin"



THE WATER BOYS • THIS IS THE SEA

How to write with style

By Kurt Vonnegut



International Paper asked Kurt Vonnegut, author of such novels as "Slaughterhouse-Five," "Jailbird" and "Cat's Cradle," to tell you how to put your style and personality into everything you write.

Newspaper reporters and technical writers are trained to reveal almost nothing about themselves in their writings. This makes them freaks in the world of writers, since almost all of the other ink-stained wretches in that world reveal a lot about themselves to readers. We call these revelations, accidental and intentional, elements of style.

These revelations tell us as readers what sort of person it is with whom we are spending time. Does the writer sound ignorant or informed, stupid or bright, crooked or honest, humorless or playful —? And on and on.

Why should you examine your writing style with the idea of improving it? Do so as a mark of respect for your readers, whatever you're writing. If you scribble your thoughts any which way, your readers will surely feel that you care nothing about them. They will mark you down as an egomaniac or a chowderhead — or, worse, they will stop reading you.

The most damning revelation you can make about yourself is that you do not know what is interesting and what is not. Don't you yourself like or dislike writers

mainly for what they choose to show you or make you think about? Did you ever admire an empty-headed writer for his or her mastery of the language? No.

So your own winning style must begin with ideas in your head.

1. Find a subject you care about

Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, and not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style.

I am not urging you to write a novel, by the way — although I would not be sorry if you wrote one, provided you genuinely cared about something. A petition to the mayor about a pothole in front of your house or a love letter to the girl next door will do.

2. Do not ramble, though

I won't ramble on about that.

3. Keep it simple

As for your use of language: Remember that two great masters of language, William Shakespeare and James Joyce, wrote sentences which were almost childlike when their subjects were most profound. "To be or not to be?" asks Shakespeare's Hamlet. The longest word is three letters long. Joyce, when he was frisky, could put together a sentence as intricate and as glittering as a necklace for Cleopatra, but my favorite sentence in his short story "Eveline" is this one: "She was tired." At that point in the story, no other words could break the heart of a reader as those three words do.

Simplicity of language is not only reputable, but perhaps even sacred. The Bible opens with a sentence well within the writing skills of a lively fourteen-year-old: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

4. Have the guts to cut

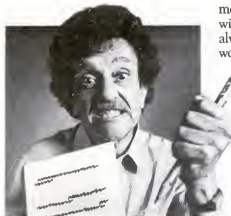
It may be that you, too, are capable of making necklaces for Cleopatra, so to speak. But your eloquence should be the servant of the ideas in your head. Your rule might be this: If a sentence, no matter how excellent, does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out.

5. Sound like yourself

The writing style which is most natural for you is bound to echo the speech you heard when a child. English was the novelist Joseph Conrad's third language, and much that seems piquant in his use of English was no doubt colored by his first language, which was Polish. And lucky indeed is the writer who has grown up in Ireland, for the English spoken there is so amusing and musical. I myself grew up in Indianapolis, where common speech sounds like a band saw cutting galvanized tin.



"Keep it simple. Shakespeare did, with Hamlet's famous soliloquy."



"Be merciless on yourself. If a sentence does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out."

and employs a vocabulary as unorthodox as a monkey wrench.

In some of the more remote hollows of Appalachia, children still grow up hearing songs and locutions of Elizabethan times. Yes, and many Americans grow up hearing a language other than English, or an English dialect a majority of Americans cannot understand.

All these varieties of speech are beautiful, just as the varieties of butterflies are beautiful. No matter what your first language, you should treasure it all your life. If it happens not to be standard English, and if it shows itself when you write standard English, the result is usually delightful, like a very pretty girl with one eye that is green and one that is blue.

I myself find that I trust my own writing most, and others seem to trust it most, too, when I sound most like a person from Indianapolis, which is what I am. What alternatives do I have? The one most vehemently recommended by teachers has no doubt been pressed on you, as well: to write like cultivated Englishmen of a century or more ago.

6. Say what you mean to say

I used to be exasperated by such teachers, but am no more. I understand now that all those antique essays and stories with which I was to compare my own work were not magnificent for their datedness or foreignness, but for saying precisely what their authors

meant them to say. My teachers wished me to write accurately, always selecting the most effective words, and relating the words to one another unambiguously, rigidly, like parts of a machine. The teachers did not want to turn me into an Englishman after all. They hoped that I would become understandable—and therefore understood.

And there went my dream of doing with words what Pablo Picasso did with paint or what any number of jazz idols did with music. If I broke all the rules of punctuation, had words mean whatever I wanted them to mean, and strung them together higgledy-piggledy, I would simply not be understood. So you, too, had better avoid Picasso-style or jazz-style writing, if you have something worth saying and wish to be understood.

Readers want our pages to look very much like pages they have seen before. Why? This is because they themselves have a tough job to do, and they need all the help they can get from us.

7. Pity the readers

They have to identify thousands of little marks on paper, and make sense of them immediately. They have to read, an art so difficult that most people don't really master it even after having studied it all through grade school and high school—twelve long years.

So this discussion must finally acknowledge that our stylistic options as writers are neither numerous nor glamorous, since our readers are bound to be such imperfect artists. Our audience requires us to be sympathetic and patient teachers, ever willing to simplify and clarify—whereas we would rather soar high above the crowd, singing like nightingales.

That is the bad news. The good news is that we Americans are governed under a unique Constitution, which allows us to write whatever we please without fear of punishment. So the most meaningful aspect of our styles, which is what we choose to write about, is utterly unlimited.

8. For really detailed advice

For a discussion of literary style in a narrower sense, in a more technical sense, I commend to your attention *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White (Macmillan, 1979).

E.B. White is, of course, one of the most admirable literary stylists this country has so far produced.

You should realize, too, that no one would care how well or badly Mr. White expressed himself, if he did not have perfectly enchanting things to say.



"Pick a subject you care so deeply about that you'd speak on a soapbox about it."

Robert

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TUESDAY'S CHILD

Aimee Mann's adventures in the glamorous life

Article by Erica Bettina Wexler

Aimee Mann—tall, willowy, wild-eyed, and platinum blonde. A striking vision, with hair in gravity-defying disarray, and that long, skinny braid with a lock of her boyfriend's hair. Exotic and weird, the effect a transcendent sexuality, feminine and masculine blending into a seamless, natural androgyny. Aimee Mann is the type the media, always hungry for appetizing new faces, should have a great time devouring. Mann is an original about to become that American anomaly: the household name. Now 24, and still modest despite her hand 'til Tuesday's recent gold-record success, Mann is different from many of her female pop predecessors. She is androgynous without being freakish, strong without being butch, provocative without pretension. Her star is on the rise: there are constant interviews, radio spots, appearances, photo sessions, and MTV favoritism. Her name and the face are in all the right places. And when you're the new face, people treat you differently. People who never knew your name now suddenly want to invite you to parties. Advertisers want you to wear their new line. Your name shows up in the papers at openings you never went to. You get asked to things because other stars will come if they know you're going to be there. Things happen even if you don't want them to.

"This whole business of new-comer-to-pop stardom—if our second album doesn't do well, nobody's going to remember who I am," Mann muses. "Didn't she have one song and a funny haircut or something?"

Climbing rickety flights of stairs to reach Jules Shear's manager's apartment (Shear wrote Cyndi Lauper's hit "All Through the Night" and is Mann's boyfriend), I am suddenly struck: Mann's Siamese cat eyes stare down at me. She's standing amazon-like, 5'9", crowned by four inches of towering hair, wearing baggy khaki pants and a slightly wrinkled, electric yellow, man-tailored silk shirt cascading over what seems an endless torso. She appears simultaneously forceful and frail. Without makeup, her ghostly white hair on milky white skin suggests she has slipped in from another realm. Her beauty makes me oddly nervous.

I sit on a fluffy beige sofa in the middle of this cozy but cluttered living room.

"I'm sorry about the building," Mann apologizes. "It's real funky. Kick your shoes off and be comfortable. It's fine with me."

Across the room Mann's flipping through a pile of contact sheets of photographs of her. There is something world-weary about her slow, languorous movements. She's been on the road now for five months, opening stadiums for Hall and Oates, Tom Petty, and Rick Springfield. Touring is wearing her out.

"I can't do this forever; the constant jiggling of touring will ultimately drive me to suicide."

She drags her slightly hunched body over to the sofa and picks up her new pride and joy, a black Ovation

guitar. As she angles her long body diagonally across the couch, her elegant legs spilling over its side, her appearance changes instantly from soft to sexy. I tell her all my male friends find her erotic.

"Oh, boy, I don't know why people would perceive me as that," she says. "When I think people are sexy it's because they are intelligent, fun, and interesting. I hope it's for those reasons and not because I'm trying to be sexy. There's only one person I want to be sexy for."

Aimee survived what she calls a "suburban melodrama." She grew up in Richmond, Virginia, the daughter of the director of advertising at a pharmaceutical company. When Aimee was five her parents were divorced. Although her mother received custody, she and her lover kidnapped Aimee, taking her to England. She was eventually returned to her father. But soon after, her father married a divorcee with two sons, and Aimee's mother moved to Minneapolis to start a new family. Traumatized, Aimee, then six years old, became withdrawn, and stopped talking.

"My dad sent me to a psychiatrist. I played lots of games that were really IQ tests. I found out I had a high IQ. I guess it helped, because I stopped going after a while." She remained highly sensitive, preferring to

spend time alone reading and painting portraits.

"The hardest thing growing up in a family of boys was that I got picked on a lot. They were the teasing type, and I had a shy, retiring, insecure personality, emotionally disturbed from all the divorces. That was almost too much to overcome. So I'm constantly amazed that here I am."

Aimee jumps up to get herself some juice and returns with the bottle in hand. She takes a long drink from it and manages to carry it off with perfect etiquette.

Lying on the coffee table is the cover of 'til Tuesday's first album. After the group signed with Epic, they got a taste of what having a major label behind them meant. I point out that the cover looks studied and slick. "Yeah," Aimee laughs heartily, "with that hair falling down making me look like Bozo the Clown I just don't know how you can say that."

Aimee Mann has been called "the female David Bowie." In fact, at 16, inspired by her idols, Bowie and Iggy Pop, she chopped off most of her hair and began bleaching it and fingerpainting it purple, red, cream-sicle orange, passing through the color spectrum. If not for the fact that she starred in several high school theatrical productions, Aimee would have been considered a complete weirdo. She wrote in her diary, "I want to be rich and famous and have a really nice studio where I can write songs all the time." Right after graduation from high school, Aimee fled from Richmond to Boston's Berklee College of Music, but after a year she tired of it and quit. She began playing bass guitar and formed an arty punk band called the Young Snakes. The Snakes, Aimee says "had weirdness upon weirdness. We sounded like a bunch of noise."

After two years of wearing torn clothes, working in a record shop and going nowhere, Aimee had had enough of the fringe life. She quit the Snakes and swore never to play underground again.

"I wanted to write love songs," Aimee recalls. "But I thought it was an uncool thing to do."

Realizing she could write what she wanted, and that being commercial and romantic weren't sinful, Mann began looking for musicians to develop a sparse and moody sound that was melodic, crafted within a recognizable song structure. One night she met Robert Holmes, a local guitarist who was also searching for something better, and the nucleus of 'til Tuesday was formed. Michael Hausman, a drummer and Aimee's live-in lover at the time, was seduced away from another band. Aimee went out another night and found Joey Pesce, a keyboardist, who sealed the group.

Like a mini-army, the band went after its objective: a record contract. They called themselves 'til Tuesday because it evoked a romantic mood. They wrote a plethora of songs, played clubs, sculpted a simple and muted look, and made an 8-track demo. Within six months, they had a local Boston following and a man-



LEAH LORBER

ager. They lived at a frenzied pace, all holding down day jobs and running between 24-track demo sessions and a battle-of-the-bands sponsored by a local radio station. They won the contest, the demo got heavy radio play, and record companies were hungry for them. To 'til Tuesday's credit, they refused to create a bidding war among the companies and signed with Epic. "They seemed the most down-to-earth and didn't want to wrap Aimee in leather and have her swallow the microphone," Joey Pesce explains.

The group's first single, "Voices Carry," hit the U.S. Top 10, the album, 'til Tuesday, went gold, selling over 600,000 copies, and the band won MTV's Best New Artist award for the video of "Voices Carry."

Thrown on tour after the album's completion, the band made an instant leap from small clubs to stadiums, reportedly with grace.

"We were on the road for several months," says Robert Holmes. "And we were getting polite applause, but the serious applause and recognition started coming when 'Voices Carry' and the video were getting lots of attention. We would introduce 'Voices Carry,' then suddenly you hear this giant roar. We were shocked. People backstage would laugh and say, 'It's a Top 10 hit.' We had lost touch."

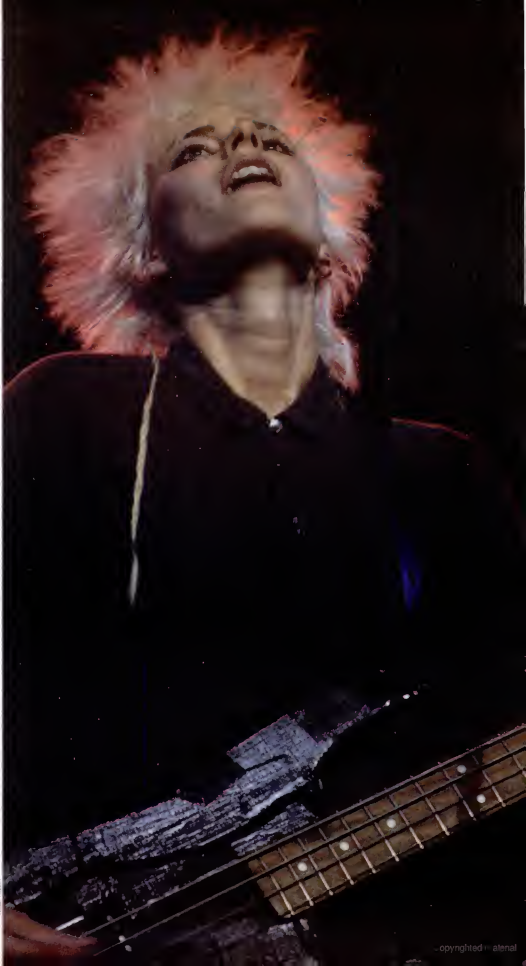
Aimee throws her head back. Her profile backlit by twilight, she resembles a 1930s movie still.

"You know what astonishes me?" she says. "Madonna. Madonna's got so many girls going to her concerts, and they all look like her. Isn't that incredible?" Mann's voice rises two octaves. "These young girls must think that since she got her way in the world, 'I'll emulate her and get my way in the world.' Or maybe they think, 'I wanna be real sexy and have the guys want to do it with me all the time.' Or maybe she's a big pop star and that's enough. At first, I thought Madonna's act was real antifeminist, but I think she's just being what she wants to be and pays no attention to male or female reaction, which is cool. So maybe we should just leave her alone. I think, though, having a lot of girls at her concert is better than a lot of guys who just want to hump her."

"I have male fans. I don't know what they want to do with me. I certainly don't inquire. They're pretty young and odd. They're really cute. They're usually under 20, outsider kinds of guys who have funny haircuts, dress differently. You can tell that they are from small towns and are ostracized a little bit and really feel like I understand. Which I do. I think that it's really sweet that they think someone understands."

Unlike Madonna, Mann is not a natural extrovert. The creative process excites her more than stardom, which Mann thinks "is an embarrassing thing to want." Being a celebrity is not something she feels at home with. She's still an outsider looking in.

"I never want to go out to clubs because I feel like I'm never going to get in. My friends always say, 'Come on, you're a celebrity now. Don't worry.' So, I went to



"I have male fans. I don't know what they want to do with me. I certainly don't inquire. They're pretty young and odd, outsider kind of guys."

this party at Private Eyes [a New York club] and my name was supposed to have been left at the door by the host. I get there, say my name to the doorman, the guy looks at his list, then says, "SORRY." I say, "Fine, we're leaving, no problem." But the host came out and pulled me in. I hate that whole door-policy thing. What am I supposed to say? I'm a celebrity, cause all my friends tell me I am. I'd rather have a drink where it's private.

"So, when I went inside it's really crowded and someone said, 'Do you want to meet Paul Young and Julian Lennon?' I said, 'Yeah,' though I felt like I had no right to meet them. I didn't have anything to say to them. Paul Young was much taller than I expected, and Julian Lennon was drunk and couldn't have cared less. The security guard made me feel like, 'Don't get real close.' I talked to Paul Young for five minutes, told him he was really great. But it was so noisy and crowded that we had to shout, and people kept coming between us, so we gave up."

The door opens and in walks Jules, Mann's boy-

friend. She springs up to greet him, all light and giggly, with hugs and kisses. With his dark, curly hair, pale skin, long, lanky body, and brooding countenance, Jules could be Aimee's soul twin. He leaves us to make phone calls. Mann is glowing as she returns to the couch. It's hard to imagine her as the dark and moody songstress of "Voices Carry." Too "downbeat" by industry standards, that song was a surprise intruder in the glib and giddy American Top 10. The video powerfully translated the song into a mini-drama about the tensions and violence that explode within a relationship when a woman places her own needs and ambitions ahead of her man's.

What Mann writes about are women who may have one eye shut in romantic reverie, but who keep the other warily open. Romantic, but too self-aware and analytical to be self-deluding, she chronicles love affairs that lead into conflict and disillusionment: romantic illusion became transparent. Aimee reports from the battle zone. The showstopper is "Voices Carry." "I'm in the dark / I like to read his mind / But I'm frightened of the things I might find / Oh, there must be something he's thinking to tear him away / When I tell him I'm falling in love why does he say / Hush, hush, keep it down now / Voices Carry."

"It never occurred to me that songs about conflict would be depressing," she says. "It's what happens to you in your life. I'm really optimistic. Problems are really interesting. You work them out by talking about them, and if I have defined a situation really well in song, that makes a good song for me. Everybody says I do such mid-tempo, slow, gloomy things. Yeah, but that's what I like to write. I'm glad 'Voices Carry' proved everyone wrong. You don't have to have upbeat happenings things to have a hit. But I'm writing happier songs now."

Jules and Aimee, in perfect romantic harmony, are writing songs together. She says they want to be the next Ashford and Simpson.

"I lost my virginity at 17," Mann says reflectively. "But I should have waited until I met Jules. The worst thing you can do when you are young is think, 'God, I've got to lose it because all my friends have done it already.' The worst thing you can do is adopt someone else's morality, because it will ruin you." Mann can't help but continue. "When I was 17 all my girlfriends had done it and I hadn't. I was pretty frightened of it. There were no guys I had any sort of rapport with. They might as well have been Martians as to how close you could get to them. They were such 'gay' guys. I never thought I could find a guy I could talk to like my best girlfriend. So I met a guy who seemed better than the rest and I gave it up. He broke up with me after a week. My next half-dozen experiences were me thinking, 'This is really depressing, but you better get used to this because the rest of the world is doing it and they will respect it of you.' If I had only realized that my instinct was right, wait until you can really relate with someone. I'm very sensitive and I need someone who is equally sensitive, and there's no crime in that. You don't have to harden yourself, you can find people who understand you."

I ask her if she remembers her first orgasm. She recalls like a cobra whose territory has been invaded, then springs back gleefully. "A long time after I lost my virginity. I'm not into sex as a bodily function. To be

excited about sleeping with someone I have to be totally in love with them and trust them. It's like if I was watching TV one night, I never thought, 'Gee, I want to do it now.' It was always very specific. But I always thought there was something wrong with me. You're doing it with a guy and every 30 seconds he elbows you, and asks, 'Well, is it happening yet? Is it going to happen sometime soon?' She laughs uproariously. "God, give me a break! It's such a weird thing. If they are concerned about it, they are too concerned, waiting for it to HAPPEN. Jules is perfect; he doesn't think like other guys. He thinks about sex like me. He'll probably kill me for talking about sex in a national magazine. I can see the headline: VIRGINITY LOST."

Later that evening, Aimee, Jules, and I are on the outside patio of Oren's, a casual but chic Manhattan restaurant. Aimee and Jules are neighborhood celebrities here. The maitre d' is oversolicitous, but unseasoned celebs Aimee and Jules are shy about the attention. She's hyperattentive to Jules, quizzing him about his day, his needs, and his appetite. His melancholy face lights up like a city after a blackout. The waiter brings an oversized strawberry daquiri with two straws, and Mann and Jules sip their ambrosia, eyes locked in lovers' delirium. I feel like an unwelcome alien dropped from a distant planet. Jules and Aimee are wearing identical clothing, but in different colors. They knew each other casually years back when Jules was frequenting the record store where Aimee worked. After seeing Jules's latest video earlier this year, Aimee had her manager invite him to her concert. They met again.

Suddenly, Jules gets up from the table and excuses himself. "I have things to do," he says. An American Express card is exchanged. Aimee looks playfully, longingly incredulous as he leaves.

"It bothers him when people treat him like a disposable quantity," she says. "It's obnoxious. Like if we are walking on the street, and somebody wants him to take a picture of them and me."

With career demands escalating, life has become for Mann "an incessant barrage of details." As success insulates her, the band and its management have become her family. Finding time to see Jules, her best friend, and read her new collection of stories by Anthony Powell is becoming difficult.

Noticing that Mann is already bored with her food and restless with the interview, I hand her a list of questions and ask her to interview herself. With an elfish grin, she looks them over. Playfully, using two separate voices, she begins.

"Do you own a car?"
 "No."
 "What car would you like to own?"
 "Something small, old, and foreign."
 "If you could live anywhere in the world where would you live?"
 "London."
 "What Greek god do you most resemble?"
 "Don't know any."
 "Do you have an easy or hard time getting out of bed in the morning?"
 "Sometimes I wake up early quite spontaneously, but then I insist on going back to sleep because I love to



Photo © David Laundy



Steve Lisowski

dream."

"What do you eat for breakfast?"

"Nothing."

Abruptly, Aimee interrupts herself, exclaiming, "This is fun," and then continues.

"Do you remember your first girlfriend or boyfriend?"

"My first boyfriend was David Shiver, when I was 12. He was 18 and had a red Afro. And the first guy I did it with was Earl Smith. Hello, Earl."

"Favorite part of the male body?"

"I'm envious of the muscles, particularly their legs and biceps."

"Are you religious?"

"I believe in great things."

"What three records would you take on a desert island?"

"I'm sick of pop music so I would take Bartok's 'Concerto for Orchestra,' with a score to follow for fun, Bach's 'Brandenburg Concertos,' and Gregorian chants for spookiness."

We've been talking at Oren's restaurant for nearly two hours. Aimee's been a magical mix of liness, limp, and Martini. She's just a step away from being a cover girl. This reminds me of one pop starlet whose record company convinced her to have her nose and teeth fixed, and wear "sexier" clothes. Surviving on a weekly \$250 salary, supplemented by merchandising and publishing advances, Aimee resists being packaged.

"People have suggested lines of clothing," she says incredulously. "One blow-dryer company wanted ME to do a commercial. I thought, 'Gee, that would be great for my credibility in the art world, a fucking commercial!' There might be a couple of commercials I'd do, but I would have to think that people really needed

this. If Pepsi offered me a zillion dollars, I'd think, 'I don't even drink the stuff. I don't believe in it. I'm sorry.' Lionel Richie is embarrassing. It's shit, but I can see how you can get pressured into it by your entourage! 'Come on, Michael, we're so poor.' But what you're basically saying is: I have my price."

At the next table a man is eavesdropping. Aimee motions to me, "He's really getting a kick out of our conversation." I decide to ask some people around us what they think of Mann's hair.

"Go ahead," says Mann.

Turning to a table of three very chic ladies, with perfectly coiffured hair, I ask one in a blue linen suit, "Could you tell me what you think of this woman's hair?" She freezes in mortal terror, as if I had told her that her charge cards had been revoked forever. "Look how normal we are dressed," one of the other women diplomatically covers for her, responding through a stiff smile. "It looks good on her, but not on us. How's that?"

"That was a very tactful, evasive answer," Aimee chuckles, "intimating that they are incredibly square and I am incredibly weird. Little do they know I'm probably much more normal than they are. 'And what are your deviant sexual practices?' " Aimee says in a mock reporter's tone.

"Let's ask them when was their last orgasm," I suggest.

"Oh, God!" Aimee squeals.

At the table behind us, four deeply tanned men and women in their early 30s are having a rowdy good time. Addressing the two men, I ask innocently, "Excuse me, but what do you think of this woman's hair?" Adventurously, one of the men grabs the tape recorder and replies, "My name is Hank Kissingir. I used to represent the United States on various tribunals. I am

very impressed. I am wondering how long that lasts!" Giggles from the women at the table.

Aimee, rising to the challenge, snaps, "The color or the fact that it stays up?"

"The fact that it stands up and the color."

"I don't know. I rode in an open convertible yesterday, and it didn't do anything."

"Is it true that you have had this haircut for more than a year?"

"I wash it once a year."

"What do you think she does for a living?" I ask.

"I think that she's doing a Ph.D. in Public Policy."

"No, a hairdresser," shouts his friend. "Is this a documentary about yuppie restaurants?"

Aimee lets out a giant yelp and dives into an imitation of a midwestern tourist. "We've read a lot about yuppies, but we've never actually seen one."

A truce is called.

"What do you guys do for a living?" Aimee's interviewer asks courteously. "Anything interesting?"

"I play in a rock band," says Aimee. "And she writes for SPIN magazine. She's doing an interview."

"What band are you in?" He asks and then, tentatively, he guesses, "I'll Tuesday?"

Silence.

The women's eyes pop out, focusing telescopically on the possible celebrity.

"Who is she? Who is she?" they chirp.

"Ah, really!" says the guy. "No, you're not her. Are you really her?"

"Why would I be talking to SPIN magazine?" Aimee ribs.

At the smell of fame, giddiness swells from their table. "Who is she? Who is she?" the women chant like a Greek chorus.

"Cyndi Lauper," he teases. Tense laughter rises from their table. "I've seen her videos," he announces. "Are you really her?"

"Yes," Aimee nods.

"Cause I saw you being interviewed by Mark Goodman. I don't mean to be didactic or facetious, but what's the name of the song?"

"Voices Carry." Aimee says with restrained pride.

A tidal wave of glee crashes, in an odd harmony the two women sing, "Oh, yeah, 'til Tuesday! Oh, no way, that's you! I love that song!"

Aimee, glowing from the attention, jests, "OK, I'm getting some belated recognition, so let's give it up."

"You're the one getting pushed against the wall in slow motion!" one of the guys exclaims enthusiastically. "The instant replay where the guy's hitting you. Great, great photography!"

"That's a funny part to remember," Aimee chides.

"I'm going right out and get the record," squeals one of the women. Then, catapulted by the excitement, they begin bombarding Aimee. "How's the interview going? Can I get tickets? Are we going to be in the interview? How did you break in? Why did you come to the restaurant?"

The spokesman for the group grabs the tape recorder again. "We represent a wide range of people here with us now. We are just happy to be with you. I recognized you. I knew it! I knew it!"

"You knew," Aimee replies, "that I was some kind of weirdo."

Silent Night?

NOT IF WE CAN HELP IT!



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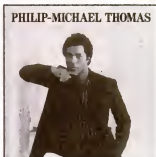
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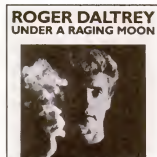
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SPINS



courtesy EMI Records

Platter du Jour

Kate Bush
Hounds of Love
EMI Americo



If Kate Bush had been a writer instead of a musician, she might have written something like *Alice in Wonderland*. She writes children's songs for adults, constantly drifting into girlish dreams, while maintaining a vibrant sense of romantic adventure. Every little daydream and all her fragile emotions are projected in a fantasyland of poetic imagery and off-beat music. With traces of classical, operatic, tribal, and twisted pop styles, Kate creates music that observes no boundaries of musical structure or inner expression.

Though she has always been a top 10 artist in Europe (this album was No. 1 in England as of this writing), her odd style and even odder vocal squeal have always kept her off the American charts. But even though Kate continues on an off-beat course, this album might gain her some well-deserved recognition from the American mainstream.

On *Hounds Of Love*, Kate continues making Gothic pop with brooding string arrangements, sparse and dissonant percussion, and her bittersweet vocal squawks and squeaks. While she introduced intermittent pop touches on her previous album, *The Dreaming*, her music is still anything but pop. On side one's "Running Up That Hill" and the title cut, she maintains her romantic edge, but structures her songs more accessibly, singing within a range that isn't overly abrasive or far-reaching. These changes don't appear to have been made as concessions, and certainly don't hurt.

The rest of side one has more of Kate's twisted musical sensibility and the lyrics deal with her confused romantic desires. She wants to be enraptured by love,

but always ends up shattered and lonely. Just when she wants to be left to herself, she becomes morose in her independence. On "The Big Sky," Kate again adds a more accessible touch, with hints of psychedelia, but then returns to the familiar womb of her childhood fantasyland on "Mother Stands For Comfort." The side closes with "Cloudbursting," which appears to be an anti-nuclear song with an arrangement framed by haunting orchestration and a minimal rhythmic approach.

While side one is subtitled "The Hounds Of Love" and is a collection of quite different songs, side two, entitled "The Ninth Wave," is a somewhat loosely interconnected collection of musical movements that are even more bizarre and mystical than Kate's previous works. She dreams again on the operatic "And Dream Of Sheep" and is emotionally trapped on the claustrophobic "Under Ice." On "Waking The Witch," one of the most puzzling songs on the album, Kate brings a funkier edge to her music and seems to be in a state of spiritual confusion. Any other interpretations beyond that should be left to individual opinion.

It took three years for Kate to make this album, and it was two years before that that she last released an album. With no plans to tour America, Kate is likely to remain obscure on this side of the Atlantic. While her eclecticism is welcomed and rewarded in her homeland her genius still goes ignored here—a situation that is truly a shame for an artist so adventurous and naturally theatrical.

—Steve Matteo

Edited by Rudy Langlois
and Richard Gehr



Simple Minds Once Upon a Time A & M

Grandeur is the hobgoblin of Simple Minds. The band has great skill and panache but on *Once Upon a Time* singer-lyricist Jim "Look Ma, I'm flying" Kerr pushes it to empty extravagance. Like a choirboy biting evangelical ruffians U2, he's losing his own fine, weirdly angelic vision. This album cranks up and flattens out the band's core religiosity. Last year's *Sparkle in the Rain* turned it into explosive, off-the-wall pop; it never caught on as it deserved to, but the radio-ready, movie single "Don't You" did, which may have been the worst thing to happen to Simple Minds. Now every cut is neat and punchy pomp in the name of Bono. Kerr works up a cheerleader rock star's mechanical pep, displaying good-time intentions in the same dumb, obvious way producers Jimmy Iovine and Bob Clearmountain demagnetize the static from the band's previous Steve Lillywhite outing, as if cleaner sound meant clearer focus.

I've found Simple Minds more consistently enjoyable than fellow moral popsters U2 precisely because they don't hit so hard. Glittering prizes were found amid the wonderment of elegant, fuzzily textured songs. *New Gold Dream* (81-82-83-84) offered the beatific notion that youth and love might not last forever but was certain for a spell, and *Sparkle in the Rain* rocked to glory with "Speed Your Love to Me," "The Kickin' Side of Me," "Waterfront," and the amazing "Up on the Catwalk" (amazing because the megalo-mania of fame must have been an unfamiliar notion to Simple Minds until this year).

Every excess and optimism (earthly or not) seemed possible for the band back

then, but in '85 their hi-ho determination sounds fake. Who can trust Simple Minds' innocence after this rapid big-beat production? Who wants it anymore? The album sucks up love, politics, and religion into a swirling vacuum of show-off musicianship. You can barely distinguish a song amid the choral singing and instrumental layers until Charles Burchill's Morse-code guitar signatures give bristling shape to "Ghastdancing."

The pacifist psalm "Sanctify Yourself" calls, responds, and thuds as it spells out the sentimentality the band has been heading for all along. This arrives full-blown amid the measured staleness of "Alive and Kicking" (1), an ornate epic—highlighting Michael MacNeely's classy keyboards, Mel Gaynor's virtuosic drumming, and Robin Clark's wailing vocal support—that strives to be an '80s "Gimme Shelter," but sounds like Meat Loaf after est. A lot of muscle is exerted to produce this large, soothing sound, but the lyrics are so vague that the band's impressionistic tendency only describes nirvana without attaining it.

Less grandiose but equally hollow are the record's best—almost good—songs, "All the Things She Said" and "I Wish You Were Here." Their expressed skepticism is undermined by hackneyed prettiness without a hint of irony, simply aural confetti; selling out disguised as blissing-out. To think Simple Minds' Top 10 American experience has been so banal that the group's hi-ho attitude has turned ho-hum. "Oh Jungelund" (see what I mean?) is the only cut that matches *Sparkle's* zest; it's also the only song that indicates new experience during the past year. It has a point (a newcower's awe at the U.S.) and Kerr delivers his most exuberant performance, tinged with exhaustion. For once the emotion seems justified, a reminder

Above, *Simple Minds*: (l to r) Mel Gaynor, Michael MacNeely, Jim Kerr, Charles Burchill, and John Gbiri.

of Simple Minds' peculiar gift for squeezing out rainbows and lifting small hopes high. But these guys promised a miracle, and I'm waiting.

—Armond White



Billie Holiday Billie Holiday on Verve 1946–1959 PolyGram Classics

Billie Holiday had the good fortune to become an American myth, which means people know more about her social degradation and self-abandonment than they do about her art. Mend your ways, ye slack-jawed voyeurs, and rush out and buy this extraordinary 10-record set, a Japanese import that contains virtually all of Holiday's recordings from the last seven years of her life. Meticulously pressed on high-quality vinyl, it includes a complete discography plus a few facsimiles of David Stone Martin's original album covers for

effect, suggesting—since no major American label has measured anything remotely this dolled up—that Japanese record companies care more about American art than we do.

Wandering into the set is like opening up a minutely detailed biography. All the different variables that affect our moods—what we ate last night, how early we woke up, whom we sat next to on the subway and what they ate last night—affected hers, too, and each of the 20 studio sessions has a distinct feel. For example, on a date recorded between 1 pm and 4 pm on April 14, 1954 (I got the information from the discography. Those Japanese sure love details) that included "What a Little Moonlight Can Do," "I Cried for You," and "How Deep Is the Ocean," she sounds sprightly and energetic. Just five months later, during a Los Angeles session featuring "Love Me or Leave Me," "Too Marvelous for Words," and "Willow Weep for Me," among others, she's confidential, sounding languorous and less brittle than usual. By the end of the 10 records, all of Holiday's varieties of mood and emotion, all the different textures of her voice, become familiar to us.

In 1952, when Holiday signed with Clef Records (where the studio sessions on this set begin), the label put her in front of a microphone with a small group, an attempt to reproduce her '30s masterpieces and to avoid the overblown, sticky orchestral arrangements that hindered her during the late '40s. Thus the music, which usually features just a rhythm section plus a saxophonist and trumpeter, has an extraordinary intimacy that Holiday obviously cultivated, most of the sessions share it. The emotional urgency she brought to the dates energized her sidemen, too: such journeyman as trumpeter Charlie Shavers and pianist Oscar Peterson unfailingly controlled, succinct solos and sympathetic obbligatos, while masters such as Ben Webster, Jimmy Rowles, and Benny Carter play as masterfully as bosses should.

As if to underscore the emotional pungency of the dates, the music has been pressed on extremely quiet vinyl. Each gang of suckers-in-the-back-of-the-head phrases is crystal-clear, each nuance of tone—a word rasped here, a phrase luxuriously smothered in silk there—accentuates the palpable aura of intimacy that saturates the records. At this, the tail end of her life, Holiday's voice sang when two-pack-a-day ecstasy to bottle-a-day hoarse. But despite the irregularities of her pipes, the sessions sound consistently relaxed, as though recorded during a jam session in someone's living room.

The album works on different levels. One hundred thirty-four songs worth, it's a guided tour through the American songbook. It's also an easy way to come to grips with Holiday the person, minus the gardenia-in-the-hair hype. Part of a boxed-set explosion—Bill Evans from Fantasy, Charlie Parker from PolyGram, Monk, Mulligan, Mingus, etc. from Mosaic—the album's a worthy tribute to a woman who spent a good portion of her life getting stepped on, and made some of the most moving, unsettling music ever recorded.

—Peter Watrous



Simply Red Picture Book Elektra

This is the soul that means bloodshot eyes, 3 AM, lined-up whiskey bottles, and overflowing ashtrays. This is the soul you'd sing if you had no food. If you had no bed, if your woman or man had left you. This is the soul of desperation, loneliness, frustration, and rage. Soul with a rhythmic groove, a jazzy slide, and a gospel glow. Soul as it used to be, when it was black slang sincerity. Only thing is, the man who sings it is white.

Mick Hucknall, the red-haired namesake of Simply Red, has taken the soul idiom and turned it into a gut-laden foray few white men have managed. With a voice as black as Newcastle coal and a delivery as insistent as a runaway freight, Hucknall has molded an old genre into something newly mesmeric.

The title song evokes misty scenes of hopelessness and want. "No Direction" casts a plaque of restless discontent, threatening cold and frighteningly bare. "Sad Old Red," a cravat-cool tune made for a gin-soaked speakeasy, airs the loneliness of a jilted man. And "Holding Back The Years" traces dreams delayed and time gone by in velvet, melancholy tones.

But don't let the murky subjects fool you—the instrumentation on this album is as joyously moving as a gospel choir. With producer Stewart Levine (of B. B. King and Crusaders fame) sculpting the band's gonfied strides, "Picture Book" paints an aural landscape as emotional as full as it is sonically shrewd. Funky breaks and shimmering horns lift the up tunes. Brush-stroked drums and waiting keyboards make the ballads expansively warm and filling. And over it all soars the passionate strain of Hucknall's voice.

Though eight of the songs are original, two are reworkings of previously cut material. "Money's Too Tight to Mention," the Valentine Brothers' tune which came and went in '82 with nary a spark—except in D.C. and St. Louis—trades the original's polished disco-funk for gritty R & B that slices Reaganomics into penny-sadism and takes some very straws at the man himself—listen to the lyrics; it'll be more fun than if I tell you. And "Heaven," the Talking Heads' bed-out paragon to empty nightclubs, becomes even more ironic with Hucknall's gospel walking set to a waltz.

Hucknall's throaty growls sometimes obscure the words, which is frustrating, since the pictures this band paints are intriguing enough to make you want to

catch them all, but to his credit, Hucknall communicates a mood so forcefully that the missing words don't affect the overall feel.

British bands have been rehashing American roots ad infinitum of late. This album does it with such sincerity and soul, the cribbing is not only pardonable, it's welcome.

—Robin Schwartz



Rubén Blades y Seis del Sol Escenas Elektra

Not as impressive as last year's *Buscando America*, Escenas is nevertheless a worthy continuation of Blades's no-compromise attempt to bring his sing-inflected, politicized salsa to a wider audience. With a production schedule squeezed in between Blades's completion of a Harvard law degree, a short European tour, and his film debut in the independent production *Crossover Dreams*, it is perhaps understandable that Escenas lacks some of the complexity, soul, and fire of his first Elektra release. Much of what I admired about *Buscando America*—its reggae elements and the experimental tone poem "CDBD," for example—are not in evidence here. Instead of radical mergers of doo-wop and jazz, or African and microlatinal melodies, Escenas contains a more straightforward presentation of Blades's craft.

But don't let the melodies be every bit as beautiful as before, just less experimental. "Tierra Dura" is a particularly lovely piece about the Ethiopian drought, with a simple, haunting refrain that only improves with repeated listenings. Less successful is a duet with Linda Rondstadt called "Silencio," which veers much too close to the enervating Latin pop ballads Rubén usually eschews in favor of rhythms with more cojones.

A nice surprise for Blades fans who remember him from before his move to the big Yankee label is "Sorpresas," a short return to his seminal work with producer/bandleader Willie Colón—the pair virtually pioneered the Latin concept album in the '70s. The song is part Greek chorus, part narration about a juggling in a seedier part of town, and involves the protagonist of one of Rubén's biggest Latin hits, "Pedro Navía." The story of the feigned death of this notorious gangster may be a covert message from Blades to those who prefer his older material. Blades lost a small percentage of his Latin

audience with *Buscando America*—not because they didn't like it, but because Elektra doesn't have the same inroads into the Hispanic market Blades's old label, Fania, does. And little Hispanic radio may not have played that album as much as the Fania release of the same year, *Mucho Mejor*. The juxtaposition of the new sounds on the first Elektra album against the more dated and romantic ballads of *Mucho Mejor* just might be responsible for the compromise in material on Escenas.

Originally, Blades was to have released an English-language LP concurrent with Escenas (did I forget to mention that all the songs on this album and on *Buscando America* are in Spanish?), but I'm told the English project—which combines pity message music with Latin arrangements transposed onto synthesized instrumentation—is a year away. Still, translations of the songs on Escenas are on the album sleeve, and they alone are worth the price of the vinyl. Blades is a fine poet and storyteller in any language, and his anthems to Latin American freedom ("Muévete"), anti-drug fables ("Caina"), and detailed ghetto narratives ("Sorpresas") overcome any disappointment I might have with something as subjective as production values.

—Carol Cooper



Gram Parsons' International Submarine Band Safe at Home Starkit

When Gram Parsons rode off into the California desert to keep a date with musical martyr Byrds in the fall of 1973, he left behind a few albums of varying quality, a number of breathtaking songs, and a substantial legend.

Parsons was a Florida kid who dropped out of Harvard, played in a few bands, turned the Byrds in to a C&W outfit for one album (*Sweetheart of the Rodio*), founded the Flying Burrito Brothers, discovered Emmylou Harris, hung out with Keith Richards, and somewhere along the line got the credit (or the blame) for starting something called "country rock." Before breaking into the rock 'n' roll big leagues with the Byrds, Parsons cut *Safe at Home* with the International Submarine Band, a group which included Parsons's future fellow-Burrito and song-writing partner Chris Ethridge and made this one LP before evaporating. *Safe at*

Home sank without a trace upon its initial release in 1968, was rereleased as Gram Parsons's Early Years in 1979, and is now getting another lease on life via England's Statik label. It's also recently been reissued by Rhino, but the Statik version has exhaustive liner notes by Sid Griffin of L.A. country-rock revivalists, the Long Ryders.

It's been a long-slow / For a long, long time," Parsons sings on "Luxury Liner"—as good an epitaph as any for a guy who wrote songs about loss, guilt, and assorted other forms of sexual agony while living fast and dying young. It's hard to know if Parsons's star would shine as brightly if he'd stayed up in the shadows (under mysterious circumstances) at an early age, leaving Emmylou Harris, Elvis Costello in his country incarceration, and a gang of post-punk country rock bands to carry on his name. The arrangements on *Safe at Home*—a collection of covers with four Parsons originals thrown in—are cheerful and untimely, but Parsons sings with heavy intonations of mortality, like he was determined to walk in Hank Williams's footsteps right up to the backseat of the limo where Hank died. Like a lot of old country records, *Safe at Home* is a little on the depressing side.

If the production is a bit thin and the choice of covers kind of unimaginative ("A Satisfied Mind," "Folsom Prison Blues," "That's All Right"), the album has the virtues of some determinedly down-home playing—particularly by session steel-guitarist Jay Dee Maness—and Parsons's songwriting—the standout being "Luxury Liner," which swings with the melancholy swagger Merle Haggard owns the patent on. With the exception of one or two knobby jordanian impressions, the vocal harmonies throughout are fine.

What seems to be lacking here is an emotional commitment to the material in Parsons's voice. He sings with a tentativeness that gets the guts out of a lot of these songs. Even Griffin's reverent liner notes concede, "Gram's harmonies aren't 100% there." And there's just a hint of Las Vegas about Parsons's reading of Arthur ("Big Boy" Crudup's "That's All Right"). Parsons sang with a mild twang and a gentle throat. It took the grain of Emmylou Harris's harmonies on Parsons's Grievous Angel album to give him the edge a lot of these tunes require.

Still, *Safe at Home* is a pretty solid first album by a band of good players who were in the process of finding their own sound. Even if they were never in it to a shame, because they played a stripped-down kind of country that really makes labels like "country rock" irrelevant at best and misleading at worst. While obviously a must-have for Parsons archivists, those wondering what the fuss was about no particular better than *Safe at Home* is imperfect, it has the saving grace of its reverence for country roots and sounds pretty fresh nearly 20 years down the line.

—Peter Carbonara

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Teddy Pendergrass
Workin' It Back
Asylum

Once, in church, the lady next to me, looking plain and 30 and man-less, felt the rapture so powerfully that she made Jesus her lover, gasping and moaning, "Jeezus... oh, JE-sus, Jesus, JESUS!" in orgasmic exhalations. Love of the flesh and love of the spirit have tended to get confused at times. So when Teddy preached about love's healing power, the ladies threw their panties onstage. And he played along, giving "women-only" concerts and passing out chocolate Tootsie-Roll pops for those ladies overcome by the urge to suck on something brown and sweet.

Me, I came to appreciate T.P. when I caught him with Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes on a 1974 cable TV special. Teddy, looking handsome, suave, and teddy-bearish all at once, sang the call-to-conscience message of "Wake Up Everybody" with such easy, confident strength that he achieved a peerless masculine nobility. Soon after came his solo career and the Church of Love. At his best he reached for Otis's crown, working man-to-woman balladry into earthy, believable climaxes.

But after you've recorded "Close The Doors" and "Turn Out The Lights," what's next? "Take Off Your Clothes"? He had the ladies in the palm of his hand; he made them tremble with a growled "come here, woman!" but always kept a sweetness in his tone, letting them know this big, powerful dude was going to be gentle. The stick became too easy and soon his music bordered on self-parody.

Then came the accident. He emerged from his car's wreckage paralyzed from the waist down, shattering a million women's dreams. A lotta people were shocked that his companion that night had been a pre-op transsexual. Philadelphians knew better; Teddy had often hung with a gay crowd and yes, he/she could have been just a friend. Teddy fought back with quiet dignity, and within a year he was laboriously regenerating his vocal abilities.

So, it's kinda hard to discuss objectively Teddy Pendergrass's new LP, heralded as his return to form. First off, you just have to step back and applaud his achievement; the man has climbed a mountain. "Never Felt Like Dancing," the single, sounded real good over the radio. Teddy's voice seems rich and forceful over a moody, mid-tempo groove. But when you're ready for him to turn the song out, the climax ain't there.

Unfortunately, the seven remaining tracks (five ballads, no blockbusters) also lack killer climaxes. You're left with a set of languorous romances cushioning Teddy's still warmly gruff, bittersweet voice with impeccable, crushed-velvet production. Like a canny pitcher whose fast-ball has lost its zip, Teddy gets by with guile, sliding around notes, straddling beats, varying his timing. But even the best of these songs, the creamy "Love 42" and "Love Emergency," the delightful Cecil and Linda Womack '60s, R&B throwback, cry out for a dominating vocal performance.

Just about every tune on *Workin' It Back* aches with longing for love—but for a different kind of love than the feverish carnality of the past. Teddy's words and voice project vulnerability; even the LP's one steamy moment in "Let Me Be Closer" ("I thought of your body has got me erect / I'll do you, you'll do me / 'til we sweat") opts for mutuality in loving. No, the ladies won't be throwing panties at T.P. anymore. But it sounds like he's looking for something else these days. *Workin' It Back* suggests he might have just enough juice to get it.

—Randall F. Grass



The Residents
Part Four of the Mole Trilogy
Ralph

Part three of the Residents' Mole Trilogy doesn't exist, but we can't let that keep us from utter confusion. It all comes down to the age-old battle between Moles and Chubs. Part one of the trilogy, 1981's *Mark of the Mole*, recounted the natural disaster that led to a Mole exodus from their homeland and their defeat in the Great War with the Chubs, a neighboring culture. The *Tunes of Two Cities*, from '82, contained examples of each culture's music. It turns out that the Moles prefer bleak, dirge-like noises guaranteed to drive their neighbors worky, while the Chubs favor a lighter, cheerier sound suitable for drinking, dancing, and easy listening ("Oh, I get it, the Chubs represent... and the Moles are... gosh!").

Still paying attention? Jesus. Let's see, where the hell... oh yeah. Now. The *Fourth Part of the Mole Trilogy* isn't really a Residents record. Well, it is, actually, but what they've done is invent this group called The Big Bubble, and this record, my patient friends, is the group's first LP on Chub Frinkie DuVal's Black Shroud label, no less. The Big Bubble is a pretty mediocre guitar band, actually, but it

achieved notoriety when a revolutionary Mole leader asked it to play a rally in support of Mole nationalism. As far as the Moles were concerned, the Bubble rocked out, particularly when mumbling rousing anthems in the outlawed traditional Mole tongue.

Ralph's press release suggests that you "just sit back and listen to The Big Bubble's first LP as though it were just another mid-'80s rock band and you just happened to be a Mole, or a Chub, or most likely, that troublesome creature known as a Cross. Be forewarned that if you were a Cross, this record would psychologically tear you in two like a piece of tissue paper." Yikes!

But as anyone who's listened to the Residents since they put the Beatles (the proto-Chubs) in their place 39 years ago knows, the Residents' particular *je ne sais quoi* can wrench tears from a cat. The Big Bubble, strangely enough, bears the usual Residents signatures: sludgy synthesizer rhenoidies, pump underneath garbled vocals sung by what sounds like an inbred Louisiana lumberjack. Pure genius, so to speak.

As the saying goes, buy or die. Practically anything by the Residents will do, from the early pop satire to the recent initiation of the Great Compensers series, a 16-year project they've kicked off with the semi-brilliant *George & James* (Gershwin and Brown). Not coincidentally, exposure to the Residents is a known retardant to impending Chubhood and the aural equivalent of a Q-Tip through your brain.

—Richard Cehr

THE JON BUTCHER AXIS ALONG THE AXIS



Jon Butcher Axis
Along the Axis
Capitol

It just goes to show you—you can't trust anyone anymore. At least when it comes to rock.

Here I've been listening to all acquaintances tell me for the last couple of years about Jon Butcher and his trusty guitar. Of course, I should have been a bit skeptical since a lot of these guys are the sort who read *Guitar Player* cover-to-cover and actually enjoy drum solos. Still, after hearing constant raves about Butcher's guitar playing and claims that he and his band, the Axis, are the Jimi Hendrix Experience reincarnated, I figured something was up.

So here comes *Along the Axis*. I've listened to the thing plenty now, and it's your basic good news/bad news situa-

tion. The album is a good one—energetic and crammed with pop hooks—but it's not the face-melting guitar stuff I'd been led to believe Butcher dealt in.

All those Hendrix comparisons! Flattering to Butcher, I suppose, but they don't do either man justice. They're a rock stereotype, whereby every black guy who can play blazing lead guitar is cast as the "new Hendrix." But that's like saying every white guy who plays piano is the next Barry Manilow. Besides, while *Along the Axis* does give Butcher the chance to burn the frets a bit, the record succeeds because it's more than just music to tune air guitars by.

Take the two strongest songs, "Stop" and "Electricity." These two wanna-be-hit-singles kick off the record, working along the lines of Van Halen's "Jump." You get a pop song with a driving, forceful beat powered along as much by pounding drums and keyboards as by lead guitar. The hooks here are strong enough to catch fish, or radio programmers, with.

Then, an instrumental break leaps out like some sort of coiled snake and Butcher's guitar starts doing audio somersaults, zipping purposefully up, down, and around the chords. If Eddie Van Halen is listening, he'll probably want to go out and burn his guitar. As quickly as Butcher snaps into the solo, though, he snaps out of it, and the songs bounce right along with their pop beat. A nice, neat package that could help anyone get over a fear of guitar music.

There are also some surprises. The album is dominated by the slower tempo of Butcher's romantic material, songs like "Sound of Your Voice" and "That's How Strong My Love Is," as well as the title track. These gentle ballads actually—oh horror of horrors—throw in dreamy synthesizers and string arrangements. With Butcher restraining the frenetic solos, but still letting his guitar lead the way, these tunes have enough muscle to whip any of the wimpy romantic ballads Phil Collins churns out.

There are also some brief funk forays, like "Only the Fox." Butcher's a sly one. He spends most of the record letting his songs—instead of his guitar pyrotechnics—take centerstage. Then, to close the album, he throws in an instrumental, "The Ritual."

Okay, so here he does let loose a bit more like a Hendrix or, more appropriately, Robin Trower. You can almost see Butcher making those scrunched-up faces guitar players get when they solo. But the beat is played at a walk here, not a run. It's skill, not flash, and Butcher loses sight of the fact that there has to be a tune involved for a solo to sound like more than nails scraping a blackboard.

Sure, there are a few flaws here. Butcher's straining, squawking vocals sound like the noise a dog makes when you pull its tail. And most of the time the lyrics are like Poetry 101: "My body feels like a pendulum / Hear the ticking inside my heart / Sounds just like a big bass drum / I know we could never part."

Well, you can't have everything. But *Along the Axis* offers more than enough to establish Butcher as both the guitar whiz I've always heard he was and as something more.

—Craig Tomashoff

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Sade
Promise
Epic

Things are not good in England at the moment. Race-related riots are tearing the streets apart, no one is allowed the basic privilege of a job, and Iron Maiden is in the charts again. Sade, *Sade*, from whom we expected so much, has released her second album. Overrated is an adjective being hurled at this act, and listening to *Promise* you can see why.

The Nigerian-born Londoner leapt to fame on the sleek foundations of her debut album, *Diamond Life*. Her beauty graced the covers of multitudinous glossy magazines, and her voice was heard in incidental music on daytime soaps like *Guiding Light*. She was the acceptable voice in Yuppie car cassette players.

This current selection sees Sade and her boys purify the white-bread jazz/funk lines they established on *Diamond Life*, but there is nothing to match the stature of "Smooth Operator" or "Sally." The closest contender is "By Your Side," a ballad made powerful and melancholic by Sade's thoughtful lyrics and Stuart Matthewman's heart-wrenching sax.

"Sweetest Taboo," the single, with its emphasis on gentle percussion and subdued guitars, is representative of the rest of the album. It also provides evidence for the argument that Sade is a torch singer without the torch. Her voice has no blood, no crime, and no soul. The lyrics on "Is It a Crime," about lingering love for an ex-boyfriend, are obviously heart-

felt, but they cannot successfully marry her voice, because it simply lacks range and depth. When, as on this track, an echo is added, the effect is even more like someone shouting in a cave. "Fear," an effective song about a matador's girlfriend, has a dramatic military drumbeat and Spanish-style strings, but there is no throatiness or feeling to set them off.

The general aura of superficiality is heightened by the arrangements (Sade's) and production. As on *Diamond Life*, the overall effect is highly polished and tastefully subtle, but nothing has been done to make the songs more interesting. There seems little point in putting grooves between the tracks on Side 2, because they are nearly phonic. Sade has honed background music to a fine art. Her songs, which evoke arty French films and smoke-filled speakeasies, should be sung slumped against a piano to people who feel no desire to look away from their dates or drinks. That's the trouble with background music—it may be pleasant, but it's easily ignored.

—Jessica Berens



Christian Marclay
Album Without a Cover
Neurot

I. There's something prudish, repressed, about Christian Marclay's music—the guy must have an awesome record collection, but he cuts himself off from the pleasure his vinyl would give most of us. His records are his Tinkertoy, and you

gotta have a lot of them to make the big projects. Marclay is into records as pieces of flat, black plastic: he paints on them, sculpts with them, and at the end of some performances, makes a ruckus smashing them up. They are his tools, and his stage, too. Maybe Marclay's coolest theatrical gesture involves his phonoguitar, a turntable strapped on like a guitar and played by cranking the tonearm over, says a Jimi Hendrix album. He's a whistler from Europe piloting his own wheels of steel. *Record Without a Cover* tracks one Marclay performance, wherein he splices together at the turntables a barrage of sound-effect, classical, soundtrack, environmental, and a ton of other records he picked up on the flea market circuit. It's a sparkling facade and a giant headache. God, it's great!

II. "This unconventional record is designed to be sold without a jacket, not even a sleeve! . . . You do not have to worry about getting the record scratched, or about getting dust or fingerprints on its surface. On the contrary, the damages will in time enhance the recording."—from *Record Without a Cover*'s press release.

III. The first long moments: dust on records. The sound speeds up, more records seem to be spinning, the only sound the teeny pops and hisses of styluses raking over the muck and grime crusted in the grooves. It gets a little louder, but it's still nothing but that shit. Then drums carefully cut in, and bells. They sound like the shit, and vice versa.

Here's what Marclay is thinking of: Any sound can be a surprise.

IV. How to make a golden temple of debris!

IV. "In 1954, when they announced the H-bomb, only the kids were ready for it."—Kurt von Meier.
V. Like most people reading this magazine, Marclay grew up with records meaning music as much as radio or bands did. So he treats the records he spins as if they were musicians: their performances are logical and extremely rhythmic. At certain moments the whole mess sounds like an orchestra of deaf musicians tuning up. You hear a piece of a tango, say, or a little of Ellington's "Car-

avan," but they compete with the sound of a needle scratching up a record, or nature noises. They never really get to be a tango or some Ellington. Marclay produces an ensemble apocalypse, maybe something only a post-adolescent who never got rid of his record fetish, but who indulged it ridiculously, could achieve. It goes boom. Get this record, play it, and then scratch it up. Then play it some more. Marclay'd like it like that.

—R. J. Smith



Madness
Mad Not Mad
Warner Bros.

Like, life's full of contradictions, man, and you'll find most of them on Madness's sad, yet masterful, new record. Good! bad, hot/cold, black/white, chocolate/vanilla, and then/now all make their respective absence/presence felt hereafter. But the album will probably prove irritating to those who prefer their humor/pathos tidily packaged and labeled. Humor, as playwright Joe Orton once noted, is serious business—as serious as Buster Keaton's face, and, in this case, as serious as the death of Britain.

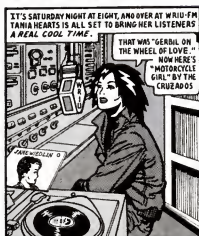
Back in the halcyon days of the 2-Tone ska revival, Madness made it easy for us. These seven nutty boys were the Fishbone of their time, exploding onstage like lottery ping-pong balls and playing their collective baggy trousers off while providing the most physically amusing rock spectacle since, I don't know, the New York Dolls' drag show or something.

Madness still packs more collective pop (or is it vaudeville?) punch than whoever happens to be at the top of their little gray country's charts. The band combines the best and worst aspects of the situation into poignant little scenarios of everyday strife, then relates them with steamy, tropical luster. For example, on "Uncle Sam" the group's relentless neo-ska attack now takes the form of a sarcastically chipper jangle ridiculing British collusion with the United States's cruise-missile strategy. And this is one of the lighter cuts.

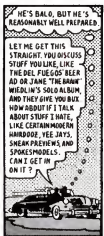
The shadows on council-flat walls and hallways crop up repeatedly, as do debt collectors and a work shutdown. This brilliantly done artifact concludes with "The Coldest Day," where the Reverend Marvin Gay Sr. shot his son, a song that begins with the hope of "Sexual Healing" and concludes with a reference to Johannesburg. Sad not glad.

—Richard Cehr

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The best in haircut music, movie and tube music, and big sneaker music

Column by John Leland

Singles



Joan Chuska

Could be the best way to hear music these days is to watch TV. Evane Cervenka on *Twilight Zone*, special reports on the "Hoboken Sound," and the always rocking *Miami Vice*—the tube is finally living up to its rep as a cool medium. And you can hear that on current wack. TV and movie themes are all over this month's crop: *Twilight Zone*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Mayberry RFD*, and *The Munsters* all drop their themes into some pretty heavy grooves. Movie sound tracks also cough up singles whole. Beyond that, the usual genre fuck, the return of some old wavers, including two Blondie look-alikes, a bunch of non-LP B-sides, and a truly laudable collaboration.

LL Cool J: "I Can Give You More" b/w "I Can't Live Without My Radio" (Def Jam/Columbia)

On the street, the rap record that made the most noise in '85 (if you discount the Roxanne squad) was Doug E. Fresh's "The Show." But for my money, the best new rapper to emerge this year is 17-year-old

LL Cool J. His records are tough and down, down to the bone; just raps and beatbox programs that, with the aid of a big portable radio, tell innocent bystanders in no uncertain terms to fuck off. And the fly raps are obvious only after the fact. "I Need a Beat" was the first self-relief rap record (eat your heart out, Green Gartside). "Radio" is the first, to my knowledge, about blasting your box on the subway. "Don't mean to offend other citizens," he sings, "But I kick my volume way past 10." While the drum computer disrupts the peace with a hard-core rigor that makes Run-DMC sound symphonic, LL talks about boom-boom hazards: "I woulda got a summons but I ran away." And rewards: "I'm cold getting paid cause Rick said so." This is the first Def Jam disc through Columbia, maybe the best major-label rap ever, and certainly the best cut from the movie *Krush Groove*.

Artists United Against Apartheid: "Sun City" (Manhattan)

Considering that many of the artists on

this disc draw their paychecks from multinational labels that have major holdings in South Africa, this is a tougher statement than it might seem to be. And although it's true that even your dad, who voted for Nixon, agrees apartheid is wrong, it's also true he doesn't forgo huge sums of cash or chastise his peers to do so. Anyway, thinking about this "Sun City" is that it's an exuberant, funky record. It's got that anthemic, upbeat swing of late-'70s Stevie Wonder, and Arthur Baker has the sense to push the drums way over the vocals. Drums like these

can sell most any political proselytizing. But the best thing about the "Sun City" crew is that, besides being cooler than the rest of the world, they also *riff* better. So while the catchy hooks gather momentum on the main vocal lines, the hottest action is between them when everyone fights to scat the fill. Even the breakfast-cereal stars here sing hard and gruff. Perhaps the most sobering thing about the record is the number of singing lessons sacrificed to the cause.

Z-3 MC's: "Triple Threat" (Beauty and the Beat)

Hip hop works in part by sucking up familiar icons, dicing them with scratches and beats, and spitting them out in new contexts. Latest stuff to hit the mill is TV theme music, and with it public-domain songs. *Inspector Gadget*, *The Munsters*, and *Mayberry RFD* have all given it up to the beat, and the last record from this label turned on a slice of "Marseillaise." The hook comes from a chestnut no one I know can identify, but we used to sing it—"oh, they don't wear pants in the southern part of France." Know what I'm talking about? Anyway, this disc, like the previous "King Kut" by Word of Mouth, jams so much sonic and rhythmic energy into the mix—even three simultaneous human beatboxes—that it assaults you with all the sensory impact of a messy room, if you can imagine a messy room turned up really loud. There's too much going on, and it sounds very unprofessional, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't cook.

Book of Love: "I Touch Roses" b/w "Lost Souls" (Sire/Warner)

Right there in about the tenth line, singer Susan Ottaviano alludes to her goods as a "pocket full of poses." Book of Love is a haircut band. Ivan Ivan is a haircut producer, and "I Touch Roses" is a haircut record. But it's a damned appealing one at that. Except for the *de rigueur* exaggerated snare drum sound, this amounts to a mini-mix: It's quietly melodic, and all the elements are crisp and subtle. Book of Love deflates DOR/MTV bombast into a coyly tranquil tune that stretches gracefully without moaning about it. Even when the drum machines try to stir things up, the toy piano and airy vocals keep it cool enough to vindicate its drapery, cynicism. This is music for a floral video. Muzak for the dance floor—club music that's both haughtily chilly and inviting at the same time. Instantly forgettable, but subtly compelling while it's spinning.



Deon McGehee



Dana Dane: "Nightmares" (Profile)

And they're off. "The Show" being the monster hit that it was, the clones couldn't have been far behind. Dana Dane's is the first to reach my turntable. And it is slick. Not original, but slick. As in Slick Rick, the nasal, not-quite-in-time sidekick of Doug E. Fresh. To whom Dane bears more than incidental similarity. But where "The Show" lifts its look from the cartoon series *Inspector Gadget*, "Nightmares" drags up the theme from *The Munsters*. Trendwise, I score this baby 50-50: incorporating movie or TV theme music is definitely happening, but the Slick Rick style is a dead end. Stoopid degenerates to stupid in a hurry, and the chances are good that this disc escapes severe criticism only by being a step ahead of the other clones. Also because its story is pretty funny. Bonus points for jawing about homework rather than homeboys, and because none of the female characters is named Roxanne.

Richard Lloyd: "Field of Fire" b/w "Won't Give Her Up" (Mistlur import)

For three and a half minutes, "Field of Fire" is about what you'd expect from the less celebrated of television's two guitarists: a decent journeyman tune, lyrics with too many "little darlings" in them, occasional guitar flourishes, a sense of earnestness with no innocence to make it look good. Better-than-average stuff, but nothing to send to Sweden for. Then Lloyd gets his solo. Man, no wonder Tom Verlaine never recaptured television's brilliance. I'm not saying Lloyd does, but his solo solo takes the three-plus rocker into another plane. Tacked at the end of a modest song that asks you to accept it on its own formal terms, the guitar solo ups the stakes considerably, probing around the boundaries of the song, shattering its ho-hum integrity, turning it inside out. Outside of Richard Thompson and Verlaine records, you just can't find stuff like this on wax anymore. Too bad you have to get it from Sweden, but ask your local importer to pick up a few copies.

Jeffrey Lee Pierce: "Love and Desperation" b/w "The Fertility Goddess" and "Portrait of the Artist in Hell" (Static import)

Don't know where you, but I'm at the point about I don't want to hear from Jeffrey Lee Pierce anymore. He was such an abrasive shield on the (short-lived) way up that he makes a more unsympathetic artist in hell now that he's foundering. However, the *Aside* of this single hit my needle and did some crazy things with it. "Love and Desperation" isn't the

Gun Club, vintage or otherwise, but it has a snaky, neon swamp guitar line that bites, and Pierce's trebly vocals cut like a razor. Like all good post-Doors L.A. artists, Pierce combines irresponsible slumming with melodramatic poetic pretensions. But on "L. & D.," he's less cartoony than in the past, and his imagery touches the ground fairly regularly. As corny as the combo may be, the song really does make you sense both love and desperation. The B-side offers two arrogant self-indulgences—a poem and an instrumental—that return me to my former prejudices.

Winter Hours: "Churches" (Link)

Thank God for the electric guitar. Without the prudent and deft use of two of 'em, Winter Hours would fade into the tasteful but bland fabric of EEL music. And any arguments that they're from New Jersey would do nothing to alleviate the problem. While singer Joseph Marquis wanders feyly, "groping for a melody," two twisted, interwoven guitars put all the interesting action in slightly shadowed relief in the underpinnings. To like this record, you have to listen to the band. Like all cool people from their neck of New Jersey, they grew up profoundly influenced by the Feelies, and you can hear it in the clean, single-string guitar lines that open up the sound but promise to crush the bubble with every move they make. Winter Hours don't hammer at it, they just sort of pile bricks on a ledge over your head. Their literary attempts to make you think are by and large useless. The band's strength is that it freezes you so you can't pull any triggers, intellectual or physical. You can skip the eviscerated cover of "All Along the Watchtower," but the other three songs prove that there is sonic action due west of the Hudson.



Pst, pst! Word up on what's hot: (opposite, top) Lt Cool / is, like, fresher than Fresh (as in Dough E.), with a new groove that crushes the competition and lets innocent bystanders to fuck off; (opposite, bottom) some innocent bystanders, Book of Love; (left) Winter Hours is from New Jersey ... and they'd do anything to alleviate the problem; (below) Richard Lloyd, three minutes of ho-hum, then some shattering guitar; (bottom) Jeffrey Lee Pierce ... get out of here.



SIDESWIPES

The Smiths' new three-cut, non-LP single sounds more like a progress report than a real 45: "The Boy With the Thorn in His Side" and "Rubber Ring" could be nice, melodic Meat Is Murder album cuts, and "Asleep" is a naively moving piano and voice lullaby (Sire) ... **Trouble Funk's** "Still Smokin'" (Island, from the go go film *Good to Go*, sounds like a cross between a jammin' party record and a commercial for go go. A party commercial? The pro-go rap reneges a bit on the music's grace-saving elimination of the distinction between audience and performer ... **MC Craig's** "Shout Rap" (Pop Art) only furthers my conviction that "Shout" was one of the coolest and most unassuming visionary records in recent history. Here it switches (or clarifies) its context without batting an eye or—more important—missing a beat ... Politics notwithstanding, it's great to hear **Prince** stretch out and play some funk guitar on the overhauled version of "America" (Warner). And it's hypnotic to hear the groove carried to 10 minutes. But it's too much to stretch it to 22. "Girl" is the non-LP throwaway B-side ... Those adorable **Beastie Boys** claim the girls are on their dicks on "She's on It" ("Instead of counting sheep / Cold counting Beastes"), but with this finny sound, I doubt it (Def Jam/Columbia) ... Even the girlfriend, who liked hearing "Take on Me" on the car radio, wants no part of A-Ha's "Train of Thought" (Warner). Can you blame her? ... "Knights of the Turntables," by the **Dynamic Duo** (25 West), uses a scrap from the girlie, lots of aggressive scratching to create a hip humping rap about some funky urban jousting ...

The **Choice MC's** get it done with equal élan using the theme from *Mayberry RFD* on "Gordy's Groove" (Tommy Boy). Evidently a reference to the episode in which Opie went to New York and bought a box and some Soudosonic Fire 12-inches ... **Love and Rockets** ties a catchy, light pop tune to an incompatible electrobeat and overblown production on "If There's a Heaven Above" (Beggars' Banquet import). "God and Mr. Smith" is a better dub ... Speaking of alternate versions, **Celuloid** has issued original versions of **Fela's** "Army Arrangement" and "Zombie," the latter backed with "Monkey Banana" and "Everything Scatter." These are monster tracks, practically album length, and knee-deep in mournful-to-militant funk ... That **Petrol Emotion's** "V2" (Rough Trade import) is a driving shuffle beat and guitar song that lets the drums take it higher. Remember those halcyon postpunk days when repetition built intensity? These guys do ... "Tarzan Boy" by **Baltimore** (Manhattan) is careerist DOR that doesn't live up to its wild name. But I fear that on the ninety-ninth time I hear it, I'll perk up with my ears and say, "What is this? This is cool." But maybe not ... The ever-def **Run-D.M.C.** back "Can You Rock It Like This" with the non-LP "Together Forever" (Profile), a slow, live cut about the crew's biggest asset: friendship. Not their toughest rap, and the echo doesn't help, but there's a good feeling in these grooves ... If you're the type that buys a record to hear a weak Buckwheat impersonator say, "Bite his ass, Peter!"—and I don't put it past you—try **Spyder-D's** "Buckwheat's Beat" (Profile).

UNDERGROUND

Column by Andrea 'Enthal

Twist music completely, and you get art damage—a pretentious, inaccessible mess. Without a twist, music can only be imitation. There's no future in that. Somewhere between imitation and outer space is the underground, and somewhere in the underground the future is forming. We've got a lot of twisted minds making music, putting kinks in sacred formulas and worshipping previously ignored traditions. The half twist is the soul of creativity. Without it, nothing new can be born.

Guy Kyser is a magically twisted sort. His half-mutant style of off-kilter warbling and the surreal narratives he produces with **Thin White Rope** are like

thin white rope



a slice of wild mushroom, with an impact twice as deadly. The band hails from Davis, a cow suburb 75 miles north of San Francisco and south of nowhere. There's a University of California at Davis. The state capital is nearby Sacramento. Drive out of Davis and you can see state bureaus and office buildings and state-of-the-art farmyards. Davis is so nowhere that the band still gets nervous and excited anytime a club books them because they haven't had a chance to play that many "real gigs." Everyone who has ever lived nowhere knows the desperation. Thin White Rope also knows the fantasies that save.

"Carl went south and walked out on his hometown," Kyser begins in "Down in the Desert," the opening track of **Thin White Rope's Exploring the Axis LP**. "He said it was nowhere, that he'd find a new job and fit in. Carl went south with a sigh of relief, and he said he'd be happy with anything different at all." With its sinister pulse and jangle and gentle pop roots, **Thin White's** music is almost paisley. Kyser takes the

band one baby step beyond run-of-the-mill Ameripop with homey but tangled narratives whose psycho-surrealism belies this band's superficial normality. "Dead Grammas on a Train" starts like a traditional country-rooted train-wreck ballad, but somehow defers. In its explorations of American roots (and stems and seeds), **Thin White Rope** mixes and mismatches traditions with a delicate deftness only Australian bands have captured before. They're pop enough to fool your mom into thinking you finally brought home some real music and crazed enough to warp your mind so it never works like hers. But what can you expect from an album by men from nowhere recorded at a studio named the Surf Bowl on a stretch of California beach called Point Dume? Connect with Frontier Records, P.O. Box 22, Sun Valley, CA 91353.

As mournful, distant shepherd voices and horns and the sounds of goats maa-ing and clapping in time to the bells on their collars fade into the click of the groove, the **Shop Assistants** close side one of their 7-inch EP, **Shopping Parade**. There is a primitive sound, mysteriously warm and simple, using today's paisley movement for roots, not as a straitjacket. From the pretty and harmonic "It's Up to You" with its tinkle chimes and smooth vocals through the cacophonous guitar of "Switzerland," in which all those goats and herdsman tramp by twice, **Shopping Parade** is one of those little records that show why musical skill and engineering expertise can never replace the sheer commitment of musicians who know they're nobody. An "expert" would probably think this record sucks. Singer Alex has a droll, dry, very British vocal style that can be clear and sweet like Weekend's Alison Statton's or flatly mysterious when she adopts the limited range of postpunk. Behind her, Ann and Laura bash out echo-laden percussion. On "All That Ever Mattered," their drum sound has the haunting reality of a child's Christmas toy. Add cymbals and chime blocks to complete the sound. David's guitar grates like a fire-aking subway on "Switzerland," a slice of soft discord in which feedback spirals out of the mix like swirls of smoke from a blow-out candle. The Subway Organisation, 4 Rylestone Grove, Bristol BS9 3UT, England.

Droning and dragging, with rusty guitar streaks and deep, stormy bass lines as dark as bus exhaust, **Live Skull** whines and grumbles a strident mixture of flat, tuneless vocals and mantra-esque pulsations when it brings its New York City postpunk damage to vinyl. Working in the same traditions from which Sonic Youth and the Swans coax their sounds, with a spiritual debt to Teenage Jesus and DNA, **Skull** adds a twist of Killing Joke to the mixture.

Guitars squeal with tunings straight out of the dentist's chair, and harmony is something only sissies care about. Those same sissies might be scared away from the spooky dirge of "Brains Big Enough," where guitars slither like the wind through an abandoned Victorian estate. "Glee Product" pounds and thunders through equally dragging guitar chimes with more monotone vocals, while "Ha Ha Ditch" has something to say about "a simple abortion," though



it would take better ears than mine (or a lyric sheet) to figure out just what. Why **Live Skull's** album is titled **Bringing Home the Bait** is a puzzle. It sounds more like bringing home the razor blades after Halloween. Those who like sounds dark and slow and dedicated to the holy dirge can get their bloody fingers on this vinyl through Homestead Records, P.O. Box 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571.

Talking about blood, Australia's **Spunk** adopt a name that sounds like piles and an accent from the American South to create **A Bloody Mess**. Stealing a sound that's part tie-dyed '60s, with streaky



sweeps of elastic guitar, and dragging it into the '80s with sparse, clear, clacking percussion, the Mess is a subdued snail's crawl of an EP. Its title track is a meandering, magnolia-scented ballad with sleepy vocals and a slowly building pace. "Bang Shang a Lang" attempts American boogie rock, and "The Meaning of Life" has the soft intonation of a postpunk dirge. There's a lot of '60s revivalism going on in Australia right now, but it's a revival with a half



twist. While Americans are busy discovering their roots, Australians are plundering the world for ideas. Maybe they're trying to make American music but just not getting it right. The result is a mixed-and-matched coupling of American, British, and Aussie sensibilities that makes "revivalism" mean something more than "we've got no future, so let's hide in the past." Mess is offered to the world through Greasy Pop Records, P.O. Box 136, Rundell Mall, Adelaide 5000, Australia. An earlier Spikes EP, *6 Sharp Cuts*, is available in the United States through Big Time Records (America) Inc., 6410 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038.

Sally Patience creates a throbbing monster of a dance track, "Triangle Man," with chugging and snorting pig sounds and a nonstop pulse over a din of backwards mandolin swirls. There's no Sally in the band or even a Saul Patience. Instead there's Catherine O'Sullivan, who sings "I'm a triangle man" in pure, sweet, womanly tones, dripping with an accent limney enough

to distill into limeade. Exactly what kind of man a "triangle man" might be is never explained. "Inocules, I saw through that," she continues, delivering a double dose of surreal poetry based on sounds rather than sense. More grungy stunts chugs and snorts fill in between the lines. The flip side, "Buried in My Boots," is an electro-samba of drawn-out keyboard slithers with a rhythm track set to the electric organ patterns Aunt Millie used to use for her Sunday afternoon recitals. Sinisterly packed with gargling and whimpering backwards background vocals, it's a twist of spaghetti-western kitsch that makes you wonder what Patience has been so patiently listening to all these years. This record enters the United States through Rough Trade Distribution (415-621-4307).

When you start out half Italian and half Polish, listening to Johnny Cash records in Lexington, Kentucky, you can't help but see things a little twistily. San Francisco's **Angst** makes Cuisinart rock, mixing a cup of surf with a country/rockabilly yodel or two and adding a down-home *Come With the Wind* drawl and some Athens-style lull-and-chime guitar to an approach that's all garage. The band is composed of two brothers—known to their parents as Joe and Jon Ryskevitz but to the world as Joe Pope (in tribute to the most famous thing both Italian and Polish) and Jon Risk—and drummer Michael Hursley. On *Life*, their current LP, **Angst** lovingly tackles Americanisms with "This Gun's for You," an exercise in Batman-surf gone country, and late-night movies in the cautionary tale "Butter Grace." Hursley understands the lure of punk's constant pound. Though nobody would mistake his drumming for hard—or any other kind of "core," Hursley's magnetically unstable beat gives the band hypnotic appeal. To it the brothers add deliberately flat, even sour, postpunk vocal recitations. Their first record, simply titled **Angst**, showcases the band's rockier and more humorous side with the wild and rude "Nancy," which suggests that Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie engage in White House-lawn activities unseemly enough to turn photographers red, and "Pig," with its chorled tunes to law-enforcement types. **Angst** Comes from Happy Squid Records, P.O. Box 64184, Los Angeles, CA 90064. *Life* was released by SST Records, P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260. Jon, Joe, and Michael can be contacted at P.O. Box 4931, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Above: Australia's tabulous **Spikes**, into a Southern Gothic kind of postpunk groove, are (l-r) Jim Selene (bass), Mark Brown (vocals/guitar), Doug Thomas (vocals/guitar), Greg Swanherow (drums), and Ian Lisa (M.I.A.). Opposite page, below: Live Skulls Tom Paine, Marnie Greenholz, James Lo, and Mark C. bring home the bat in their own dark, slow, and dedicated fashion.

If that isn't enough to keep you in vinyl or confused, you can get even more information from *Writing Dept.* (P.O. Box 5599, San Francisco, CA 94101), a 76-page rock encyclopedia in fanzine form of current Bay Area bands. A cooperative effort started by Eric Cope, vocalist with Glorious Din, *Writing* does the best job I've ever seen of capturing who is who in San Francisco's underground. Full of contact addresses and phone numbers, this neatly typewritten and lovingly laid out 'zine covers bands, retailers, local personalities, clubs, and publications. Each person or organization contributed \$25 to the publication's production, but the result did not degenerate into ego and hype even though bands submitted their own copy. Some made ads of their contributions. Others wrote fanzine-style articles. The Acid Chickens submitted an impressionistic explanation of their

existence: "They appear uninvited and stay as long as you're awake, longer if there's food in the fridge." Three Mouse Guitars reminisce about a gig they did a year ago with the Pimplepreppies, and Tripod Jimmie submits a picture of its namesake Jimmie (a three-legged dog). The bands that didn't have \$25 or didn't contribute are listed, too. The whole affair is fun though somewhat frustrating because it's not indexed, alphabetized, or otherwise organized. It's a first-rate, firsthand, and one-time-only publication that you can get your hands on—whether they're sticky, bloody, or stuck in mittens until spring—for \$2.

If you'd like to find out more about the underground rock press, send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope in care of SPIN, 1965 Broadway, New York, NY 10023, and we'll send you an information sheet with names, prices, descriptions, and addresses of the best underground fanzines. If you ask for it you can also get my list of the 298 best/worst band names, including Grandpa's Become a Fungus, Goats Don't Shave, and Liberate Coughs Up Blood. And listen for SPIN Radio Underground, a radio version of this column. If your local college, commercial, or noncommercial station doesn't carry the program, ask them to. We'll provide it without charge to any radio station that wants to air it.



LIVE SKULL



Bringing Home the Bat

DER KOMMISSAR

What everyone should know about Boris Becker before he becomes tennis's No. 1.

Article by Angela Gaudioso



Jim Kravitz/Picture Group

Ion Tiriac, tennis's Transylvanian terror, who claims to be related to Count Dracula, is Boris Becker's manager. Immediately following the 17-year-old West German's historic Wimbledon victory, Ion was heard to tell Becker, "Your life is over. You are born again with me." In his spare time, Ion, whom Ilie Nastase calls a "tough guy," eats shards of glass. Asked what kind of circumstances could provoke such dramatic displays, he says, "You use toothpaste? Toothpaste made from powder, powder made from sand, glass made from sand."

Yes, Ion, but what about your digestive tract? "You don't digest, just eliminate."

It's mid-September, and Tiriac's been stuck in Oklahoma for three days for the so-called Tulsa Challenge tennis exhibition. The matches, boasting Becker and Kevin Curren, this year's Wimbledon finalists, and Guillermo Vilas and Vitas Gerulaitis, haven't been able to muster more than a third of the 9,000 fans it takes to fill the downtown convention center.

Ion's losing money in this pasture, and the morning-drive DJ on Kelli is saying Becker's 144-mph serve would "whip the peewee and puddin'" "out of his game. Ion's committed to stay, but he's spending most of his time working the phones, making deals, setting up more lucrative stops for Becker—keeping the faith in the wilderness until they can get back to the big towns and the big deals.

I had been inextricably locked in a chess game with Tiriac which began after Becker won the Wimbledon men's singles title in July. My efforts at getting an interview amounted to a conundrum of mailgrams, hand-carried and Federal Expressed packages, and a torrent of phone calls and messages ad ridiculum. By September, though, it had become clear to Tiriac that I was as determined to get an interview as he was not to grant me one. We compromised. Ion made it difficult—to test me. I grew older.

The phone rings in my Tulsa hotel room. It is the surly, gruff monotone of the man who kept me at arm's length during the U.S. Open. There is no "Hello" or "Wie gehts," just "Tiriac."

"Boris will not be able to talk to you tonight. He'll be having something to eat, then he's going to bed. Eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. O.K.?" End of terse message. Words are time and time is money.

The master of subterfuge calls me back. He's changed his mind. Boris's itinerary for the next day is tight. Quickly my allotted time evaporates as Tiriac recites: "9:30 Tulsa Tribune, 11:30 NBC local news, 11:45 Kelli radio, 12:00-2:00 press lunch, 3:00-4:00 practice, 4:00-5:00 tennis clinic, 7:00-11:00 the games."

There's a knock at the door. Guillermo Vilas, who's also holed-up in the downtown Weslin Hotel, strolls in, suavely clad in off-duty Elisse and Puma. "I have Ion on the phone," I tell him. "I'll be a minute." Recently embroiled in a tempest over accusations he took appearance money, Vilas has been working aggressively on his own resurgence.

"Don't let Ion give you a hard time," he says, tossing back a disheveled head full of ringlets.

A striking contrast to his mentor/business partner, Tiriac, Vilas off-court is a charming philosopher, poet, and musician, who makes the thought of sharing Juanito's Tulsa burritos and a few Carta Blancas seem agreeable. Vilas, who has known the enigmatic Count for 15 years, says, "Ion's putting you off because he's concerned that once you get Boris started he might ramble, and you'll print everything he says."

As we walk out toward the elevator, Vilas offers to answer any of my questions, "But talk to your boyfriend first." Namely Becker. Wiseguy.

In the mid-'70s, Ion Tiriac's will of steel helped shape Vilas into the giant-slayer who won 50 straight matches and 15 titles in 1977 and became the No. 1 player in the world. They extended their collaboration to the ownership of five tennis clubs



Ion Tiriac

and "the Becker acquisition"—Vilas put up half of the \$250,000 Tiriac paid Becker to sign the West German athlete nearly two years ago. The 46-year-old Tiriac, who says he's "too old" to coach, then enlisted Germany's national coach, Rainer Bosch, to continue polishing Becker's game, while the Rumanian Count juggles exhibitions, tournament appearances, endorsement deals, and the gypsy life like an armful of rackets.

Tiriac's undeterred vision is welded to Becker's image and game. Perhaps that's his genius—single-mindedness. The coveted status of stardom that Becker might enjoy—the cocktail parties, celebrity bashes, and jet-set scenes—must be cast off for higher goals. And if Becker's memory lapses, Tiriac's doesn't. During Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, Boris had tickets to see Bruce Springsteen, but was "encouraged" by Tiriac to relinquish them each time as he advanced in the tournaments. "If I was another guy who just wanted the kid to be happy, he'd have said, 'Yes, go to the concert, you're young, you should do it,'" says Vilas. "But when you do things like win Wimbledon it's not by luck. You can win one tournament maybe, but not Wimbledon."

The morning after my arrival in Tulsa, Boris Becker, all 6'2", 180 pounds of confident, yet angelic golden boy, is sprawled on a sofa in the hotel lobby. I'm reminded of what John McEnroe said after he first met him: "He seems so much bigger than you think." Dressed in tennis casuals he'll probably outgrow before his next birthday, Becker greets me for the first time since the U.S. Open, when his lightning serve froze the official Omega digital clock before he was unstrung by Joakim Nystrom in the fourth round. That night, in Flushing Meadows, New York, just prior to the match, Boris, reputed for his exquisite control of his game and his emotions, paced in the men's locker room, looking uncharacteristically nervous. During the match he spat a litany of angry rantings in German at his Puma racket after every unforced error. Even umpire Mike Lugg caught hell from Becker. "One more mistake like that and you're out!" Becker warned him. The press reported that a downtrodden Becker had, for the first time, acted his age.

Now it's weeks later, and this morning Becker's sunny and fresh-faced, sitting with the pleasant, understated Bosch, who brought Becker to Tiriac's and Vilas's attention, but seldom draws it to himself. Before we can begin the interview, Tiriac, hunching, stone-faced, walks up and says, "Be careful with a magazine like that, O.K.?"

"Careful of what?" I challenge.

In West Germany, tennis's Golden Boy is so loved that he can't walk the streets, and sometimes resented: an anti-Boris fan club already has 148 members.

Though Becker's manager, Ion Tiriac, is known for eating shards of glass in public, he's no flake. To Ion, Becker is the ultimate "property."

He ignores me and says again to Boris, "O.K.?" Then Tiriac, who when looking at you seems to have seven peripheral vision, says, "Well, your magazine more," he hesitates, apologizing for his English—"more liberal than *Rolling Stone*."

"You mean progressive," I offer. "Whatever," he says brusquely. "You have one hour. You can get out of him even what his mother led him when he was six months old."

I remind Tiriac I was granted three hours, and as he quickly shuffles away, I note that scoring popularity points with outsiders doesn't interest him; the only points that turn his head are those his players earn to enhance their standing. Bosch, who speaks no English, quietly walks off behind him.

Becker says he is closer to "Günter" and Tiriac than he is to his own father. On the *Tonight* show, he had said he felt like he had "three daddies." Now he tells me that if there's any resentment felt by anyone around him, it's by his father. He endearingly mimics 50-year-old Karl-Heinz Becker: "I'm your real father, not them."

It's apparent early into our conversation that Becker wrestles with more than a few of the attendant distractions and complications of being a superhero. For one thing, he can no longer live in West Germany, where all national broadcasting was preempted to televise his Wimbledon and U.S. Open matches to 20 million viewers. Lufthansa, the national airline, announced his scores to passengers in-flight.

"I cannot walk on the streets, it doesn't matter if it's Munich, Hamburg, or Leimen [his hometown]," says Becker. "If I go out, I wear disguises in Germany. I'm living in the world now, and it's hard sometimes

for my parents to understand what's going on. I'm 10 months on tour, and they see me like two months. In the beginning they say, 'O.K., for sure,' but they didn't realize it was the reality. It's still tough on them, but slowly, slowly they get used to it. It's not too bad in the U.S., but it's getting worse here every week."

When he does go home, the enfant célèbre is conspicuous by his Blues Brothers punk shades, and the company he reportedly keeps, which includes German TV personalities, Princess Stephanie of Monaco, and, more recently, attractive pro-tennis player Susan Mascarin.

A day doesn't go by in Germany when Becker isn't in the dailies. "Boris says anything," claims Associated Press journalist Nesha Starcevic, "and it gets a headline." Sweetheart though he remains to a majority of his countrymen, a small backlash has stirred up against Becker. Recently, a West German postal worker, annoyed by the Becker brouhaha, started an anti-Boris fan club that plans to give out T-shirts with "Who the hell is Boris Becker?" across the front. In less than a month, 148 members joined. Says the club's founder, Juergen Pfaffe, "All this monkey business about this girlfriend here and that princess there, that's enough!"

It's a late Tuesday afternoon and downtown Tulsa is oddly tranquil. A softening sun silhouettes Becker, who, seated and relaxed, conveys quiet composure and tangible magnetism. Like Nastase had told me: "He's the most mature 17-year-old I ever met."

"I was on the phone two days ago with an old school friend," says Becker. "He was talking to me like a hero, like an idol. I tried to be like it was two years ago..." His voice trails off. "It's hard for them—they don't know how to treat me anymore."

"Does that sadden you?" "... life goes on," says Becker matter-of-factly. So, too, his Concorde pace. "I've not many close friends because I'm one week here, one week different place. Acquaintances, yes, but not close friends."

The lonely hotel hours—between matches, during rain delays—the stress, and the press are made bearable for Becker by his constant companions,



Norman Lowndes/Photo Disc

Walkman, American Top 40, and MTV. (He's got a particular penchant for video animation, such as Dire Straits' "cartoons.") Tiriac had listed the increasing encroachments on his client's time: "In addition to 40 weeks on tour this year, we now have more responsibilities to the game and the media. It's getting out of hand, the over-publicity he has, particularly in Germany. It's becoming ridiculous." Becker has even gotten offers to do a couple of movies, one of them about Renée Richards, the transsexual tennis player. But Becker and Tiriac are aiming for the long-term volley that a career sidetrack could impede. "Maybe when I'm 30," says Becker.

The intense publicity may have gotten in Boris's way during the U.S. Open. The draw produced the likelihood of a McEnroe-Becker face-off in the quarterfinals, and as the tournament progressed and both players kept winning, the pressure and anticipation built. Before the outcome of the fourth round, CBS, assuming the champs would meet, preempted its programming for the night of the anticipated match to televise it nationally.

"In the players' lounge everybody was talking about it," says Becker. "Other players and guys in the locker room who didn't like McEnroe kept saying, 'You're going to beat him.' And maybe in the back of my mind I was thinking about playing McEnroe during the Nistrom match."

But it wasn't to be. "I did everything possible I could during the match. I was fighting, I was diving. I tried everything, and it just didn't work." Instead, Becker lost his Ellesse shirt to the cool Swede Nistrom. "After the match," he says, "I went back to my hotel room and I got so pissed off I lost. I was doing sit-ups and exercises for an hour or more."

During a press conference at the U.S. Open Becker had expressed eagerness to play McEnroe. Now he tells me, "Hopefully, I'm not playing him in the next 10 years, but I think I have to."

"You mean you're not looking forward to it?" "Of course, a little bit, because he's the best player. I could learn a lot from him, but he's, at the moment, a little bit too good, maybe."

But Tiriac concedes nothing in answering questions about Becker's readiness to face McEnroe in a tournament. "Which McEnroe?" grows the riddle master. "The McEnroe who played in the Masters, the McEnroe who played in the U.S. Open, the McEnroe who played Wimbledon? Boris has a good chance to beat him. McEnroe, for one reason or another, up and down."

(But in two recent exhibitions, Becker played the McEnroe who has dominated tennis since the retirement of Bjorn Borg, and lost both. "You don't become No. 1 by winning one tournament," said McEnroe.)

There's a growing concern, though not on Becker's part, that if he continues to throw himself around the court like a rag doll, he might sustain injuries that could set back his game (and the solid gold Ebel watch he wears on court) more than a few hours. But he's oblivious to words like "fear" and "pressure." Or so he says.

"To be No. 1 in tennis you have to be not normal. I'm not normal in my physical, in my head, in everything."

In the nearly two years that the triumvirate of Becker, Tiriac, and Bosch have collaborated, Becker has reached the '84 Australian Open quarterfinals and the '84 Italian Open semifinals. In 1985, he has won Queen's Club, Wimbledon, and the Association of Tennis Professionals Championship, and made the 1985 U.S. Clay Court and Tokyo Seiko series, and the Davis Cup finals. He's also won a number of exhibition titles. Between prize money, BASF, Puma, and Ellesse endorsements, personal appearances, and other money, and other money, marketing strategies transformed by Tiriac, one report pegged Becker's 1985 earnings at \$3 million. "It's ridiculously low," says Tiriac.

There is a formula to the brain trust's success. It is



McEnroe/Craig Cummings

"To be No. 1 in tennis," says Becker, "you have to be not normal. I'm not normal in my physical, in my head, in everything."

contained in "the program," a plan for the development of the consummate tennis property to which Becker, Tiriac, and Bosch have dedicated themselves unconditionally. While the tennis prodigy says he is not materially motivated, months before his 18th birthday, Tiriac bought his protégé a Monte Carlo address. By maintaining a six-months-only-year residence in Monaco, Becker reportedly pays 19% of his earnings in tax compared to the considerably feistier 56% income tax he would otherwise pay in West Germany.

As long as he calls Monaco home, Becker may also elude Germany's mandatory draft (an 18-month obligation). Translated: he may not have to trade his Puma Pro-line for a Deutschland rifle. Tiriac's (and Vilas's) retirement fund would also remain unscathed.

Tiriac seems defensive about Monte Carlo: "I am based there. The German Federation didn't want to have any economic part in his development, and I had to do it myself. It's also easier to do it from here than from Leimen."

Boris is oblivious to, and perhaps uninterested in, his manager's Machiavellian master plan, but he is intimate with the rigors of his daily regimen. "With lon it's black and white. When I'm practicing, it's nothing else, just practice. If I don't want to practice, then I should take some time off. But when I'm

ready again, I'm practicing six hours a day.

Though he says he trusts Tiriac's professional instincts totally, that wasn't always the case. The first time Tiriac suggested Boris's footwear on his serve was all wrong. Becker countered, "What the hell are you talking about? I have a very good serve." Tiriac, who claims you have to prove everything to the skeptical athlete, drew illustrations of how, with different foot positioning, Becker could move forward faster. Becker's own experimentation with the new plan finally convinced him that Tiriac was right.

Echoes Lon: "I think we have a lot of respect for each other. That's the way we are probably going to survive."

"I'm not an easy player to coach," Becker admits, "'cause I don't like when somebody's always talking to me. 'You have to do this, you have to do that.' If I'm missing a ball 10 times, I need some help and I ask Günther what I'm doing wrong, but he knows how back off."

"The program" has caused some conflicts with Elvira Becker, who disagrees with her son on the subject of deferring Boris's education. Becker has two and a half more years to go to take his *abitur* (the mandatory West German university entrance exam), but Boris, who's already fluent in English, says, "I really need it to know more about life to succeed, then I'd like it."

Clearly, when Tiriac recently said, "Tennis is 80% head, 20% legs," he wasn't considering enrolling Boris in night classes at Heidelberg University.

I ask Becker how he psyches himself for competition. Verbal sparring with Tiriac helps, he says, but he often pumps himself up for a match by "thinking about Sylvester Stallone."

"As Rocky or Rambo?"

"Both, but more Rocky when he's practicing on the beach," Becker says.

With those who say Becker may have won Wimbledon too easily, the usually patient Vilas is impatient. "Look, I think philosophy's very interesting. History is very nice," he says. "Napoleonic lost Waterloo 'cause somebody forgot to say to part of the army 'Attack,' whatever. You can write history afterwards, but some people are part of it. Easily or not, he definitely won Wimbledon, and in 10 years that's what will count. You have to say the kid is good."

Unlike the three years of hard work and nurturing Vilas required with Becker, Becker's transition to the major leagues was fast. Two years ago when he turned pro, Becker's ATP ranking was 529. But under Tiriac, who has coached or managed not only Becker, but also Vilas, Nastase, Adriano Panatta, Manuel Orantes, and Henri Leconte, Becker's game rapidly developed. Tiriac ranks his newest pupil at the top of that distinguished class in drive, raw talent, charisma, and, maybe, eccentricity. "From the beginning," Tiriac had told me in one of our phone conversations, "Boris and I had a deal that he's not jumping over the board when he wins."

"Lon is there to make sure the kid doesn't get strange and crazy and lose it," says Vilas. But somehow an image of Boris popping bottles of German Seiki champagne doesn't quite compute.

"At the end of '84 when I won the Australian Open quarterfinals," says Becker, "I was a bit shaky. I couldn't feel the ground anymore. But then I lost a couple of times, and he was reminded how fragile triumph-induced euphoria can be. It's that same volatility that Becker says excites him only about the game. All the champs lost at the U.S. Open this year: Martina, McEnroe, Chris Evert, Becker."

"There are three different Grand Slam winners now. That's why I like tennis so much. One day everything can change." He should know.

There's not much normal about a kid whose architect father helped build the only tennis courts in Leimen, on which Boris played before reaching the age of reason; a kid who a year later (aged 8) would

continued on p. 68



DEBBIE'S BACK

Debbie Harry and Chris Stein talk about Blondie, wrestling, disease, record rating, show biz, fear, and fantasy.

Between April 1979 and March 1981, Blondie, America's premier new wave band, had four number one singles in the U.S.A. The first, "Heart of Glass," was the first hit song to cross over from rock 'n' roll to disco and back. The last, "Rapture," was the first rap song most people ever heard.

Blondie was a group, but Blondie was also Debbie Harry. Debbie was the voice and face of the group. She wrote most of the lyrics. She wrote some of the music, too. Her boyfriend, Chris Stein, wrote most of the music. Chris is known as a media mind as well as an incredibly influential musician, and many of Blondie's firsts were the result of his vision.

Blondie was one of the great bands to emerge from the amazing downtown New York scene centered around CBGB's and Max's Kansas City 10 years ago. Their first album, *Blondie*, was released on Private Stock Records in December 1976. That was followed by *Plastic Letters* (on Chrysalis) in February 1978, *Parallel Lines* in September 1978, *Eat to the Beat* in 1979, *Autoamerican* in 1980, and *The Hunter* in 1982.

In 1981 Debbie recorded a solo album, *Kookoo*, produced by Nile Rogers and Bernard Edwards. Meanwhile, Chris Stein was given his own pet label by Chrysalis, called Animal Records, for which he produced records by Iggy Pop, Walter Stealing, the

Gun Club, and Panther Burns.

Debbie pursued an acting career, appearing in two New York films by director Amos Poe, *The Foreigner* and *Unmade Beds*, then in *Union City* and David Cronenberg's brilliant 1981 media sci-fi film, *Videodrome*, for which she received rave reviews. Next, Debbie decided to do the Broadway stage, appearing as a lady wrestler in *Teaneck Tanzi*, costarring with Andy Kaufman. The play closed after a few performances, although Debbie and Andy were well received.

In 1982, Blondie was not the most fraternal group around, but with a new album out they decided to do one more world tour. They hadn't gotten far when Chris collapsed. It was the beginning of a serious illness, which resulted in his hospitalization for six months. Blondie broke up formally, and by mid-'83 Debbie had dropped everything to take care of Chris. It was a long recovery, but by early '85 Chris was well again.

Chris and Debbie got rid of their old house and their old record company and got a new apartment and a new label, Geffen. In October 1985, Debbie put out her first new tune in a long time, "Feel the Spin," cowritten and produced by Jellybean Benitez for the sound-track album of the cap film *Krush Groove*. Debbie will follow up with a new solo album, coming soon to a record player near you.

The Business

You have a new record deal?

DEBBIE HARRY: Yes. I'm on Geffen in North America and Chrysalis worldwide.

Did you still owe Chrysalis records?

DEBBIE: Well, I had a contract with them. It would have gone on for a while, but it was time to renegotiate it anyway.

CHRIS STEIN: And Chrysalis just underwent major changes.

DEBBIE: Yeah, Chrysalis just went public!

CHRIS: Chrysalis...

DEBBIE: Don't say anything...

CHRIS: What am I not supposed to say?

DEBBIE: I don't know.

CHRIS: I know you don't know.

DEBBIE: Don't say anything detrimental about Chrysalis.

CHRIS: What? I'm not going to. They are what they are. They went through a lot of changes.

DEBBIE: I got a better deal.

CHRIS: Geffen is very artistically oriented. I'm not naming names, but a lot of these companies get so hung up on the business side of things that they totally lose sight of what's going on...

DEBBIE: There's a press release that Chrysalis put out about me that's very nicely worded. It explains the whole thing.

CHRIS: Yeah, it says, "We had such a great relationship, that's why she left."

DEBBIE: I got a better deal, that's all. I made a better deal. Thanks to my wonderful lawyer/manager Stanley Arkin. He's superbright and tough.

CHRIS: The whole business has changed since we did an interview last. Everything has become so business-oriented. They've learned how to sell anything. Three years ago Mick Jagger told me that they had learned how to sell shit, and that's what's changed. Any crap that comes along can now be sold. But shit has a shorter shelf life. Except the freeze-dried shit.

CHRIS: I'm convinced that a girl could come out in a black leather jacket with studs and do "You Light Up My Life," and it would be on MTV. As long as she was in a black leather jacket and fishnet stockings, they'd be playing it in heavy rotation. That's really a good idea. Billy Idol should do "I Believe."

CHRIS: Whatever. It doesn't matter. As long as the costume is right. Everybody's so hung up on the video shit that everybody forgets that it's stilling everyone's imagination. One hundred percent, it's pathetic. Rock music is supposed to have a certain intangibility, then videos give it this precise imagery. It makes it so limited. ... Every time I hear that Dire Straits song all I think about is those stupid cartoons. Whereas when you hear an old Supremes song, you have all these images of what you were doing at the time. Your youth, your first car, and so on. It's personal.



I remember journalists in Chicago being afraid to talk to me because they thought I was a punk. They were afraid I was going to beat them.

Yeah, it's true. The first time I heard "You Really Got Me," I was driving past a 15¢ hamburger place. Now, whenever I hear that song I think of 15¢ hamburgers.

CHRIS: Yeah. But isn't that a broader way of looking at things? I mean, everybody in the world doesn't think of the golden arches when they hear "You Really Got Me." Associations go much further than just what you were doing at the time. But once you get video images locked in, it reduces the power of the song. What if they had done videos of all the Beatles' songs? They would have been pathetic.

Blondie did some of the first videos. You did the first album-length video. Didn't it occur to you what a monster you were helping create?

CHRIS: No. I always thought it was secondary to the music.

DEBBIE: Now it's 50-50. Or worse.

CHRIS: A lot of these groups are founded on what they look like and not on music at all.

DEBBIE: People used to say that Blondie was too much image and not enough music. I guess it is all our fault. Heh, heh.

CHRIS: The other night I saw a video that was just this great looking chick in her underwear lip-syncing a male-vocal rock song. That's completely full cycle as far as I'm concerned.

So what are you going to do for videos now?

CHRIS: We're thinking about never doing any videos ever again.

DEBBIE: I always wanted to just take all this old footage, newsreels and stuff, and just put it together. But now it's been done.

CHRIS: I tried to sell nine hours of home movies of us on tour, like in Las Vegas, to MTV.

Maybe it was too long.

Blondie

So what happened to Blondie? Did you break up yet? Is it official?

CHRIS: I don't know. I think we broke up in 1975.

DEBBIE: 1983.

CHRIS: Actually, it was 1978, but we made three albums after that.

DEBBIE: It stopped in 1983.

Who made the first move?

DEBBIE: I decided.

CHRIS: Does anybody care about that shit?

DEBBIE: I certainly don't care.

CHRIS: Maybe lawyers care.

DEBBIE: Nobody cares. I certainly don't care. Why should anyone else care?

Well, I don't care. But what if somebody cares?

CHRIS: Clem [Burke, Blondie drummer] plays with Eurhythms.

DEBBIE: Jimmy [Destri, Blondie keyboard player] is a new father. He just had a baby daughter, Eileen, and he's very happy.

CHRIS: But I don't know what happened to all the people in all the other groups in the world either, so who cares? What happened to the Police?

DEBBIE: What happened to Van Halen? Well, they still exist, don't they? David Lee Roth was replaced—if such a thing is possible—by, uh...

DEBBIE: I was being theoretical.

But what happened to Canned Heat?

CHRIS: Well, one of them died.

Yeah, but what happened to Henry Vestine?

DEBBIE: Who knows? Maybe he replaced David Lee Roth.

Would you ever have another band?

CHRIS: Maybe rock zombies that are under complete control. See, with Blondie everybody started off together as little kids, and all that sibling rivalry just never went away.

DEBBIE: There was never a professional relationship. CHRIS: It was always founded on this bubble, fantasy trip.



But isn't it always that way in a band?

DEBBIE: The majority of the time it is, but you can only go so far that way. If you want to continue after a certain number of years, you have to be professional.

CHRIS: Tensions occur in bands. Everybody goes crazy.

DEBBIE: Especially when money comes into it. Forget it! People really go crazy when money comes into the picture. It happens every time.

Do you think you shouldn't form a band with people you want to be friends with?

CHRIS: No, you should just try to be professional about what you're doing.

You can't be too professional if you want to be artistic, can you?

DEBBIE: No, the two things have nothing to do with each other. You can be professional and still be artistic.

But you don't want to be professional to the exclusion of having a relationship with the other people you're



working with.

DEBBIE: Professionalism don't have anything to do with that. It doesn't obstruct anything. All professionalism means is laying down a framework within which to work so that you don't end up hurting the people you work with.

CHRIS: And you can't be so precious about your own work. Everybody gets so insane in a band. Everybody decides they're Baudelaire all of a sudden as soon as they join a rock band.

DEBBIE: Being too serious is another guanine.

CHRIS: A friend of ours is involved in the production of a really big, major group, and they're undergoing the same thing. They're all fighting. Nobody speaks to each other.

DEBBIE: We never got that bad. We were always able to talk to one another. I would hate to have to work with people I couldn't talk to. That's absurd.

Do you think there are big bands that aren't speaking that just stay together for the money?

DEBBIE: Absolutely. Everybody knows that.

I don't know. I always like to think of them all living in the same house, like the Beatles in Help.

DEBBIE: Like the Who. They didn't speak to each other for a long time.

I was reading Timothy White's book, *Rock Stars*, last night because I couldn't sleep and I thought it might make me tired, and I was reading about how Pete Townshend was this big druggie. I always thought he was *Mr. Clean*.

DEBBIE: I only met him once or twice.

CHRIS: I just thought he was a beer head.

Well, now he's really normal. He's a 9-to-5 book editor.

CHRIS: Townshend or Tim White?

Townshend.

DEBBIE: Oh, yeah. He's in publishing.

It's a lot like Jackie Onassis being a book editor. That's a funny fantasy career, isn't it? I guess if you're a guitar player or a first lady you have funny fantasy careers. Is there any kind of job you've fantasized about having?

DEBBIE: I'm so inspired now by legal entanglements that I want to become a lawyer.

Well, you really could become a lawyer.

DEBBIE: No, I really couldn't.

Well, it would take a few years.

DEBBIE: Yeah, that's right, Glenn, a few years. Eight. I still think about being a lawyer.

DEBBIE: I don't think I should practice. I don't think I have a legal mind.

CHRIS: If you had a legal mind, we'd have more money.

Well, you have a verbal mind. It's all words.

DEBBIE: That's only part of it. It's a way of thinking. Words are only one kind of law. What you really need to be a lawyer is to know...

CHRIS: ... how to take advantage of the next person. That's what capitalism is.

DEBBIE: Chris, shut up! Go move to Russia. You think you're a communist, go move to Russia!

CHRIS: That's not communism over there. You know that. That's not better. It's bullshit. I'm not saying it's bad to take advantage of the next guy. Capitalism is condoned ripping off. That's what's good about it. Debbie's business is a credit business.

CHRIS: That's what we've discovered.

DEBBIE: So what?

CHRIS: So what? We're giving advice to all the little SPINNERS.

DEBBIE: My advice to them is to continue to spin.

CHRIS: My advice is to shut everyone you come in contact with. I'd do it one at a time; see how long I could keep going.

DEBBIE: Yeah, Chris gets off on hacking and hewing and shooting and pretending he's murdering everybody he wants to murder.

CHRIS: If I was starting off in business, I would get the pinkie finger of the left hand of everyone I came in contact with. You get a whole collection of pinkies and you have everyone's loyalty. And fear.



The Last Couple of Years

Why don't you tell all the fans out there who have been in the dark for so long what you've been doing for the last couple of years.

DEBBIE: I haven't been in the dark. Watching TV.

CHRIS: I've been in the dark. Watching TV.

CHRIS had a weird disease. What's it called?

DEBBIE: Pemphigus. I don't know how to spell it.

I thought you told me it was pemphigus vulgaris.

CHRIS: It's this great disease. It's really a rock disease.

Because your skin all falls off and turns into rocks.

At times I looked like the surface of Mars.

DEBBIE: You did look rocky.

When did you get this?

CHRIS: When I was doing Animal Records, my own label. I was burning out. It was definitely from overwork.

DEBBIE: He got it in '81. You didn't know you had it at first, right? You'd just collapse once in a while?

CHRIS: Yeah, it sits in your body a while before it all of a sudden bursts into action.

DEBBIE: It got activated in '81. We thought it was asthma.

CHRIS: I collapsed on tour in '82. Then after a while I just started turning into a leper. It was like major disease.

DEBBIE: He couldn't eat for six months. Then his skin went.

CHRIS: I liked not weighing anything, though. I couldn't eat because I had sores in my mouth.

DEBBIE: I had to make soup out of everything so he could eat it.

What did you think was wrong?

CHRIS: We didn't know until I finally got into the hospital and was diagnosed. It's a really rare disease.

But you were sick for a long time before you went into the hospital.

CHRIS: Yeah, I didn't want to go into the hospital. DEBBIE: After 10 days of tests they knew what he had.

CHRIS: It's a genetic disorder, even though nobody in your family necessarily has to have had it. It's pretty rare. I got one letter from a guy who had it.

But I also got tons of weird letters. Everything you could think of. It was great.

DEBBIE: We got tons of nice letters. Really great letters.

CHRIS: I didn't get anything like "I'm glad you're dying. I hope you die fast."

DEBBIE: There were no rotten letters. Everybody was really nice. I saved them all.

CHRIS: Ten or 15 years ago I would have died. DEBBIE: This disease was incurable before steroids.

Before that you would die from associated infection because your skin would be all open and your immune system goes completely ferkake, right? So then you catch everything.

CHRIS: Steroids change your whole metabolism. They're weird. Now they're reducing the steroids, and hopefully I'll be off them in a few months. The disease is in remission.

DEBBIE: They monitor his blood all the time. It was stress-related. Chris wasn't handling stress well.

CHRIS: If I hadn't done what I was doing it



The tide was high for Chris Stein and Debbie Harry prior to their extended vacation.

wouldn't have happened. When they first put me on the steroids, I had some really great hallucinations. I had no conception of where I was. I felt like I was everywhere in the world. It was like an astral tour. I'd wake up and think I was in Cuba or Hong Kong. Debbie: He was still on the road. He didn't know who people were.

CHRIS: I never knew who people were anyway before I got sick.

DEBBIE: But he didn't know where we lived. CHRIS: Steroids make you hallucinate all over the place, much more than any psychedelic drugs. Then, after I started coming back to my senses, I started going stir crazy, because I was in the hospital for so long. Anyway, it's boring to talk about.

A lot of people don't know what happened to you. CHRIS: Well, now they know. It's a great disease. I recommend it. Everybody should get it. It's better than AIDS, because you don't die.

DEBBIE: You just take steroids so your hair stands straight up.

Your hair looks normal now.

CHRIS: That's because I'm on a low dose now. My hair was really thick. I would recommend steroids for baldness except that they make you heavy. I'm still pretty overweight from it.

I think you look good heavy. CHRIS: I have a sort of baker image now. I'm going to get a big tattoo on my stomach of an eagle holding a beer can in his claws.

Yeah, you're in another weight division now. CHRIS: I must be close to the heavyweight division.

Rating, Wrestling, Records

Have you been following the hearings in the paper on wrestling? Some New York legislators want to ban wrestling.

CHRIS: Is that what those hearings are for? I thought they were just going to ban the pile driver. Ban wrestling!!

DEBBIE: I thought those hearings were about banning records. Are they going to rate wrestlers, too?

CHRIS: Here's the Iron Sheik, rated PG. Hulk Hogan is rated G for general audiences, but George "the Animal" Steele would definitely get an R rating.

DEBBIE: What about the guy with the big bum? Brutus Beekface. He'd definitely get an X rating.

Is wrestling fake?

DEBBIE: No, it's real!

CHRIS: It's just as real as rock 'n' roll.

DEBBIE: Do you want to try it?

No thanks, Deb. I know you're a trained wrestler.

CHRIS: Wrestling is the same exact degree of reality as rock 'n' roll. Everybody's in these rock bands making believe they're revolutionaries and this and that. All they could give a shit about is coke and yachts.

What about record rating?

CHRIS: I think they should rate everything.

DEBBIE: Paperback books, TV shows, magazines.

CHRIS: They should rate food, too.

If they're going to rate records, I think they should rate footwear.

DEBBIE: Definitely. I'm a fetishist about it. That's admittedly true. Shoes can be erotic.

And violent.

DEBBIE: Yes, especially the left one.

CHRIS: Once that comes in, rating feet will be the next step.

In the People cover story one of the Congressional wives said she discovered the shocking truth about record lyrics in aerobics class, hearing the songs over and over again. So it seems to me that since it takes so long to figure out the hidden meanings of songs, they should use aerobics classes to rate the records.

DEBBIE: Listen, I know for a fact that a lot of ladies go to these aerobics classes and use the machines in health clubs to jack themselves off. I've seen it.

They can have X-rated health clubs for all I care.

Well, I've collected all of the exercise records and some of them are pretty suggestive. Especially Jayne Kennedy's, but even Jane Fonda's. Her manner is so tight, I find it pretty compelling.

CHRIS: Well, that morning workout show is pretty wild. But as far as the record-rating business goes, let's face it, all they're complaining about is Mötley Crüe. If it wasn't for them, nobody would bitch. Really. All they ever quote is one Mötley Crüe album.

Didn't "Heart of Glass" get banned from some radio stations because of the line "pain in the ass"?

DEBBIE: Yeah, and with "X Offender" they made me change the name. That song was supposed to be called "Sex Offender." But renaming the song turned out all right. It was the first of a big trend of things beginning with the letter X. They took "pain in the ass" out of some version of "Heart of Glass" for the radio. But there was always a version available that said "pain in the ass." There was just a single version that didn't. That was good because we could put our fingers on the album that said "contains the uncensored lyric."

CHRIS: That was stupid as shit.

It's funny that this is happening now, because for years they could say anything on a black station, especially in rap records. Because there was nobody in the FCC remotely qualified to understand a word they were saying.

CHRIS: Fab Five Freddy said "shit" on that flexidisc we put out in England.

People really go crazy when money comes into the picture. It happens every time.

Did you ever put any hidden messages, like backwards masking or whatever they call it, in any of your records?

DEBBIE: No, we're waiting for the next one.

CHRIS: I have some secret ideas for subliminal mind control. It's only going to affect these dames in Washington when they play the record.

Although I've always wanted to make a record out of plastic explosive. It would be triggered by a note, like the last note of the record would trigger the explosion and destroy stereotypes all around the country.

Acting

Are you going to act in any more movies?

DEBBIE: I certainly hope so.

Did you ever turn down any films that became hits?

DEBBIE: No, I got turned down for lots of films that became hits.

What's the weirdest script you ever got?

DEBBIE: I've gotten some really weird ones. In one I got my head cut off at the end.

CHRIS: That was good.

DEBBIE: Shut up, Chris! I read for *Birdy*. That was good.

CHRIS: That was so slow.

I saw Videodrome again not too long ago, and you were really good. I'm surprised you didn't get lots of great parts after that came out. The reviews were good, too.

DEBBIE: I got excellent reviews, much better than I thought I would ever get. It just happened at the wrong time. I did get an offer from Samuel Z. Arkoff, you know, the guy who does the exploitation films. It was when Chris was in the hospital. They sent me this script about a girl who gets imprisoned in a nouthouse and given all kinds of drugs—then it turns into a sex flick.

What was it like being a lady wrestler on *Broadway in Teneck* Tanzi?

DEBBIE: We were in previews for three weeks, and the audiences loved it. But the producers made some big mistakes. They should have started off *Broadway*, number one. And they should have done some prep work. They should have gotten more wrestlers involved.

CHRIS: It was clever to hire Debbie and Andy Kaufman. Those were the only right moves. The



director was wearing kilts . . .

DEBBIE: But it was wonderful doing the show, and I really enjoyed getting my ass thumped all over the stage.

How did you prepare for the wrestling?

DEBBIE: I went into training for eight weeks. We had the welterweight champion of Britain as our trainer. So it's fake, right?

DEBBIE: No, it's real. You get hurt. I got beat to shit.

CHRIS: We met all those guys. They're covered with scars.

DEBBIE: Their backs go out. Their knees go out. It's the same as any sport. You learn how to fall and everything like that, but all kinds of misjudgments can happen. If you take the wrong step while you're throwing somebody, you could break his leg.

CHRIS: Lou Albano looks like somebody played tic-tac-toe on his forehead with a knife.

Well, it is impressive that those guys do what they do to each other without getting maimed.

DEBBIE: Exactly. Those guys are in terrific shape and they're extremely strong. If they weren't in wrestling because of their flamboyant personalities, most of them would probably be in team sports or stunt men.

Gorilla Monsoon is a college professor. He's really interesting.

You were into wrestling long before Cyndi Lauper. Do you think you're the toughest female vocalist?

DEBBIE: No! I'm a pussycat. I'd hate to face the Weather Girls.

CHRIS: Debbie could take Kate Bush.

DEBBIE: I could beat Cyndi Lauper. Anytime, anywhere!

CHRIS: That videotape with Mick Jagger and David Bowie would be better if they were fighting instead of dancing. Like mud wrestling. They could have worn bikini briefs. The girls would have loved it.

Glitter

CHRIS: All the glitter looking bands now—it's amazing. All the biggest heavy metal bands look like the New York Dolls looked in 1972. The people that make shit up never get anywhere. It's amazing that look is still around.

DEBBIE: Kati looks just like Dolls imitators.

CHRIS: You see heavy metal magazines with pictures of the Dolls in them. That blows my mind.

Writing

DEBBIE: It was great meeting Jellybean Benitez. He's a nice guy, a really talented guy. I liked writing with Jellybean. It was a turn-on for me, after not writing for a while. I always enjoyed writing with all of the guys in the band.

You wrote with a lot of different people! Did they always give you some music for you to write lyrics for, or did you work together?

DEBBIE: It varied. I've done every single possibility. We've worked out songs live. I wrote "X Offender" live. I wrote "One Way or Another" that way with Nigel Harrison. I wrote "Call Me" instantly after seeing a rough edit of *America in Cigolo*.

I love those interviews, like with the Beatles, where they mention a title and then they talk about the song. Let me just mention some titles. Oh, by the way, whatever happened to your original bass player, Gary Valentini?

DEBBIE: We don't know. He was writing a novel the last we heard.

Okay—"Pretty Baby."

DEBBIE: We wrote that about Brooke Shields.

CHRIS: That was a fake Motown song.

DEBBIE: We met Brooke when she was a kid. The next time we saw her, she was towering over us. She really sprouted. She was so cute.

CHRIS: I got her autograph. She was 12.

"Fade Away and Radiate."

CHRIS: I wrote that because Debbie always used to



—Tom Blom

fall asleep with the TV on.

DEBBIE: Yeah, he wrote that about me. I like the line "Wrapped like candy, in the blue blue neon glow."

I love that line.

I love that song.

CHRIS: It was a psychedelic love song. Fripp was great on it.

DEBBIE: Mike Chapman, our producer, was so freaked out by Fripp. He played so loud, louder than Chapman could listen.

"Heart of Glass."

CHRIS: That was a song we had from the old days. It used to be a funky song, and we changed it around. But that song was on our original demo.

It's funny to think that it was controversial, because that came at the height of the "disco sucks" movement, and you were this rock band doing a hit disco song.

CHRIS: Yeah, now everybody has sold out.

DEBBIE: But we were the first.

CHRIS: Nobody has any qualms about selling out now. It's just people striving to sell out faster and better and bigger.



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"Denis."

DEBBIE: That was an old Randy and the Rainbows song. I liked it. I thought it was pretty.

Did you think it would be a big hit?

DEBBIE: No.

What did you think would be a big hit?

CHRIS: I knew "The Tide Is High" would be a big hit.

I thought "Island of Lost Souls" from The Hunter album was going to be a big hit. I think it was, but just on jukeboxes.

DEBBIE: That one suffered from lack of promotion.

CHRIS: And from the British invasion of the Falkland Islands. In Europe they thought it was about the Falklands. It was pathetic!

"The Hardest Part."

CHRIS: That was the first white funk song ever recorded. It was heavy metal funk, genre-breaking stuff.

"Union City Blue."

DEBBIE: That was one of Nigel's English drinking songs. I was doing Union City at the time. We also shot the video in Union City.

CHRIS: It was the first video with helicopter aerial shots. Quite possibly.

DEBBIE: Oh, Chris!

CHRIS: Okay, name two others before that.

DEBBIE: I don't know.

CHRIS: See, you can't!

DEBBIE: Oh, go burn your underwear.

"Shaylah."

CHRIS: "Shaylah" was the psychedelic country song in outer space.

I thought that was a communist song about workers.

CHRIS: No, it was like that Jessica Lange movie Country, except in outer space.

DEBBIE: Shaylah was a nice girl. It's funny, I do have visual images for these characters.

CHRIS: Actually, we and the Kinks did the first album-length videos, and they were both held up for long periods of time because they didn't have the royalty bullshit worked out. And by the time they were released there was a video glut. Ours was probably even done six months before the Kinks', but I think they were both held up about nine months.

DEBBIE: The first year they gave awards for rock videos, we got the first award. Warner Brothers sponsored the whole shebang, and Milton Berle gave out the awards and French-kissed Chris.

CHRIS: Milton Berle attacked me in front of all these people.

DEBBIE: Left me standing there.

CHRIS: Well, I always had a crush on Millie, with all those dresses. He had good taste in women's clothes.

DEBBIE: But it was the kiss that got him.

"Eat to the Beat."

DEBBIE: I told Clem [Burke, Blondie drummer] that I wanted to do a song like "Mickey's Monkey," and that's what we ended up with.

The lyrics on the whole Hunter album are really weird.

DEBBIE: Aren't they?

Yeah, they're so abstract.

DEBBIE: I know. I didn't want to do that record. I didn't want to have the band then. They made me do that record against my will. It's very intense.

It's very weird.

DEBBIE: I know. You always said that, Clem.

I like it. I love that the words are so weird. Like, "Ah, ooh, ah, the boy's herb vanilla vanilla." They are weird.

CHRIS: Yeah, those are the weirdest words.

DEBBIE: I was in a weird frame of mind. I had been reading a lot of science fiction—Robert Heinlein, Doris Lessing.

CHRIS: Robert Heinlein.

"For Your Eyes Only."

DEBBIE: That was supposed to be the theme from the James Bond movie. We thought they wanted us to write one. Actually, it turned out that they already had a song that they wanted me to sing. Kate Bush did it. Oh, no. It was Sheena Easton.



Chris and Debbie today

How about "The Beast"? Was that autobiographical?

DEBBIE: I don't even remember that song.

You know, "Billions of people have heard of me . . .

photographers would follow me, begging for a smile."

DEBBIE: Oh. That was part of the continuing epic of "The Attack of the Giant Ants" that changed into

"The Bermuda Triangle Blues." That's the continuing

saga. It's like the next statement after "Rapture."

Remember, all those Bible people used to always go

on about rapture and the apocalypse in the Bible?

Were you thinking about when you wrote that?

CHRIS: Sure.

I didn't know about the rapture business. I skipped that book of the Bible.

DEBBIE: Well, now you've heard the song, anyway.

Punk

This is about the 10th anniversary of punk rock, right?

CHRIS: Yes, and it's never been accepted.

Do you remember when they first started saying

"punk rock"?

CHRIS: Sure. Right before Punk Magazine came out

there were posters all over downtown New York

saying "Punk Is Coming." What's punk?

I've always thought that Punk Magazine really

established the term.

DEBBIE: That was it.

CHRIS: I'm sure you could find references before that.

DEBBIE: But Punk Magazine really started it as an

actual thing. It was never really called punk rock

before that.

Did you feel punk rock then?

DEBBIE: We always said we were pop.

I think "new wave" was started by a Sire Records

press release because they didn't want people to think

The Talking Heads were a punk rock band.

DEBBIE: No, it came from England.

But it was deliberately thought of as a nice alternative

to saying punk rock. It was a contrived phrase. It

wasn't a street thing.

DEBBIE: Bands didn't want to be called punk because

they wanted to get on the radio. I remember journalists

in Chicago being afraid to talk to me because they

thought I was a punk. They were afraid that I was

going to beat them.

CHRIS: But heavy metal is more punk rock now than

punk rock is, anyway. Like Wendy Williams.

DEBBIE: I like hardcore.

Hardcore and heavy metal are pretty similar musically.

It's just that one is socialist and one is capitalist.

Hardcore is asexual, and heavy metal is sexist.

CHRIS: Heavy metal has always been the same as

punk rock. The MC5 were like a heavy metal group,

really.

DEBBIE: I think I'm going to do a hardcore song on

my new album.

CHRIS: Psychedelic country hardcore.

The Message

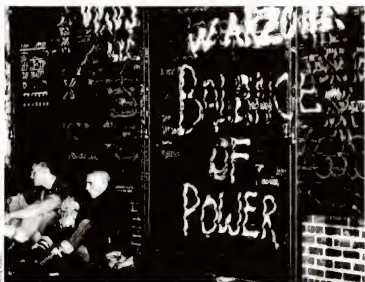
DEBBIE: People say we're making a comeback, but

this isn't a comeback. We just took an extended

vacation. We never took a vacation before.

Any message for your fans?

DEBBIE: We love you.



PUNK

Punk rock is 10 years old. If it was a kid it would be in the fourth grade. We sent one of its founding fathers to find out what kind of kid it is. He found it's a hardcore generation.

Article by Legs McNeil

W e're not really going back to CBGB's, are we? Come on, we aren't really going back to that hellhole to watch some dumb punk band!" Karen pleaded when I picked her up at the corner of St. Mark's Place. CBGB's, the infamous Bowery nightclub where punk was born and bred, was only 7½ blocks from Karen's apartment, and she could have walked. But I knew if I asked her to meet me there she never would have shown up. And I didn't want to go alone. Too many ghosts.

"The Circle Jerks, is that who we're going to see?" Dressed to the nines in a sexy black Norma Kamali, her raven hair teased straight up like some exotic seaweed and her earlobes adorned with stick figures designed by Keith Haring, it was hard to imagine Karen as anything but an amateur ingenue out for a night of slumming.

"Are these guys going to play that horrible noise while the audience slamdances?" she asked.

"No, all the hardcore fans are going to sit quietly on the floor and hope the Circle Jerks do cover versions of Joan Baez's greatest hits."

Ten years ago, when Karen was 16, she was taking the train in from the suburbs, staying out all night, picking up punks at Max's Kansas City and CBGB's and fucking them in the backseats of taxicabs. I know because I was lucky enough to have taken a long ride in a Checker with her back then. Now she is a successful artist, making lots of money, hanging out at chic nightclubs. Like most hip, sophisticated New Yorkers these days, Karen wouldn't dream of going out to a club to see a punk band. Karen has grown up.

As the cab pulled up in front of CB's, about a dozen anarchists who had unwisely pissed all their money away on booze were crowded around the front door smashing beer bottles in protest over the high admission prices and preparing for a frontal assault on the money taker at the door. Karen shuddered as a bottle exploded.

Ten years ago it was me out front getting drunk and trying to look menacing—and it was definitely a lot more fun than working for a living. I pulled Karen through the crowd and parked us at the bar. Luckily, a Billy Idol clone slid up next to Karen and engaged her in a lengthy conversation about eyeliner, giving me the opportunity to make a feeble journalistic effort to get to "know" some real live skinheads and hardcore fans and find out what pain and suffering had driven them to spend hard-earned money on disfiguring themselves.

Although the Circle Jerks were the main event, the fans shared equal billing. Of the 500 fans in attendance, about 150 of them were diehard skinheads who monopolized the front of the stage, slamming to the opening act. With their combat boots, fatigues, and leather jackets, and shaved heads, they reminded me of a couple of platoons of skinny Army recruits out for a night of barroom brawling after graduation from boot camp. But instead of brawling they were slamdancing, a ritual that can best be described as human bumper cars—running around in a circle while looking to bash into an unsuspecting fellow traveler, or staying on your feet and keeping the action going while you recover from your last collision. The only skill necessary, other than endurance, is the ability, as in bumper cars or chicken fights, to give and take punishment without malice—at least in theory. The skins don't try to inflict damage per se, but seem to be perfecting a new sport set to music. You've got to admit it's a hell of a lot more interesting than water ballet. Rarely do the hostilities escalate into a rumble. Slamdancing depends on the intensity of the music, and should one slamdancer become too battered in the melee, he only has to retire to the sidelines and become a spectator to escape getting trampled to death. But skins would rather die out there on the dance floor—or at least take their lumps—than watch quietly.

Surrounding the skinheads' circle of mayhem were hardcore's fashion plates, the guys and gals with the all-weather, 10,000-miles-without-an-oil-change, multi-colored mohawks, the half-shaved, spiked, and barbed-wired hairdos. They occasionally joined the skins in the fun of "slamming the pit," just for practice, but were saving up their energy for the Circle Jerks. Unlike the



skins, the Mohican-looking hardcore guys had girlfriends, although they weren't exactly the most appealing women I'd ever seen. In fact, the hardcore girls had started an entirely new trend in rock 'n' roll fashion. Instead of trying to look good in a daring way that focused on or created confusion about their sexuality, they were vying for new ways to see who could become the most grotesque. The miniskirted, swinging '60s London look of the early punk rock days had given way to concentration-camp chic. But the farther you moved from the front of the stage, the less outlandish-looking the fans became, until they started looking downright normal. It was hard to say who was more frightening—the Bernhard Goetztes in the back or the Road Warrior villains up front.

Before I could ponder that observation further, the Circle Jerks, a four-man band of suburban guerrillas led by one of hardcore's originators, Keith Morris, charged onto the stage and opened fire.

"This one's called 'Killing for Jesus!'" Morris shouted hoarsely, and the whole club exploded into a frenzy, even though no one could understand another word out of Morris's mouth. It didn't matter. Everyone seemed

"Hardcore—Children in dog collars or animals unleashed? A live report at 6."

to get the message and hung on every whoop. It sounded like pure angst, and Morris appeared to know from what he squawked.

The skins had changed their slamdancing tactics, now hopping up on the stage when they got close enough and continuing their epileptic fits there until two giant, gangly-type skinhead bouncers flanking Morris tossed them back into the crowd. Supposedly the flying bodies ejected from the stage were to be caught by fellow slamdancers, but this didn't always work out. Occasionally a body would crash to the floor or land on top of a few skinheads, sending them all crashing down like

bowling pins. While these cartoon antics were going on among the skins, the other fans were frantically bopping along to the music.

There's something infectious about good old rebellious rock 'n' roll, no matter how recently it has been rediscovered or reinvented, and the spirit of the moment had even gotten to Karen. When I finally made my way back to the bar, I found her kneeling on her stool, bouncing along to some '60s hippie tune that had been stripped down and modified to the chainsaw beat of hardcore. Not one of the Circle Jerks' songs lasted more than a minute and a half, and just to annoy their fans the Jerks even threw in a few old-fashioned drum solos. It was as if they were employing the most obvious gimmicks of heavy metal and punk to achieve the maximum amount of disorder. And I had to admit it was fun.

After an hour and a half and a few premature ejaculations, the Circle Jerks finally came, and a spent crowd made its way out onto the street. It was a good five or ten minutes before the last of the skins finally charged by, and I led Karen backstage to get the poop on hardcore from the horse's mouth.

Like every backstage scene I've seen, it sounded like



a B movie and looked like a Red Cross aid station. The euphoria of the show lingered, but not for long, as the realities of getting paid, getting some beers before the bar closed, and getting laid took precedence over the handshaking and backslapping. No sooner had I found a safe corner to observe things from than a young editor of a suburban fanzine who went under the moniker of Mr. Zero entered the dressing room and engaged Keith Morris in an in-depth interview that was sure to be a scoop.

"So how did you like the show?" Morris asked intently, well aware that the Mr. Zeros of the world are his meal ticket, as he attended to a back brace he wears onstage because of an old war wound received at a salsa concert. Mr. Zero looked up sheepishly.

"Sorry, but we missed the show."

"You fuckwad!" Mr. Zero laughed. He had been paid the ultimate compliment, an insult from his hero. I could tell Mr. Zero had a brilliant future as a rock journalist. I placed my tape recorder on the bench where Morris and Zero were talking and asked if I might live in it.

"You'd better watch out," Morris warned me, nodding at a roadie. "When he starts throwing up, you don't want your tape deck in his line of fire."

"Gee whiz," I thought to myself, as the interview deteriorated into a boring diatribe on the sleaziness of the music industry. "This reminds me of the good old days!" Before the swell of nostalgia had subsided, Karen pulled me aside and asked to borrow some money. A young punk stud stood against a wall, eyeing me cautiously. "Sure," I answered. "What do you need it for?"

"Cab fare," she quipped, plucking my last twenty. On the subway home I was in a boisterous, drunken mood, singing punk classics at the top of my lungs. I had gotten through the Dictators' "Cars and Girls," the Ramones' "Blitzkrieg Bop," the Dead Kennedys' "Holiday in Cambodia" and was halfway through Black Flag's "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme" when two black kids decided they had had enough. I guess they tolerated me for three songs because I was amusing, but when I showed no sign of stopping they shoved a tape into their behemoth box and cranked the volume so high it almost sent me flying into the next car.

You know who is to blame for all this hardcore stuff? Marty Thau (ex-manager of the New York Dolls and the first record producer to work with Richard Hell, Blondie, Suicide, and the Ramones) whispered to me at a publishing party the following afternoon. I huddled closer, not wanting anyone else to get in on the secret.

"Lou Reed's parents," Marty laughed. Though he was only half-serious, Marty was right. It was Lou Reed, John Cale, Sterling Morrison, Mo Tucker, and Nico who set the wheels in motion back in 1965. The Velvet Underground was the first band to make rock 'n' roll truly dangerous. While the Beatles were singing "We Can Work It Out," the Velvets went right to the nut, singing tunes about the more sinister side of the new youth culture. But it wasn't until Iggy Pop and the New York Dolls came along that the scene really started to click.

While Iggy's *Funhouse* and *Raw Power* albums, as well as the Dolls' records, weren't bolfo car-toppers or even appreciated by their peers at the time, they served as life rafts for a generation of misfits who were being driven mad by James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, America, and Yes. Alice Cooper was a brief moment of hope, but just about the time he retired to the golf course, "The Hustle" appeared and dread disco was born. It looked like rock 'n' roll had lost the war. But it was at

In the beginning, Lou Reed (top) received shock treatment in Long Island, and before you knew it the Ramones (second photo) were pleading, "Gimme gimme shock treatment." Finally even the fans jumped on the bandwagon and demanded this new type of electronic therapy.

this dark juncture in rock history that the Ramones schlepped their guitars in from Forest Hills, Queens, to the Bowery and punk exploded into a worldwide phenomenon.

Other bands, disheartened by the mindless Muzak of the mid '70s, had already converged on CBGB's, among them Talking Heads, Blondie, Television, and the Heartbreakers, and for lack of any better title they were all labeled punk. But it was the Ramones with their black leather jackets, hysterically funny wacko lyrics, and express-train rhythm who inspired the name "punk" and the ensuing revolution. And it was the Ramones who repaid our great rock 'n' roll debt to the English for their invasion of the '60s (which saved us all from being nerds) by bringing punk to New York. Ironically, the Ramones electrified London during America's bicentennial celebration when they played a three-night gig at the Roundhouse on July 3, 4, and 5. It was England's first punk-rock event. Among the enthusiastic fans in attendance that Fourth of July weekend, and later at a club called Dingwall's, were members of then-uniformed groups such as the Clash, the Pretenders, the Damned, and the Sex Pistols. They were all approaching the Ramones during the sound checks, telling them how they were going to start their own bands. Within months of the Ramones' appearances, the English punk scene had spread like wildfire. By late 1977 every magazine in America was screaming about a new wave of rock in popular music that had started in England and was being led by Johnny Rotten—one of the kids who

"It really burns me up to see malcontents with purple hair and grungy black clothes slouch around acting superior."

had cornered Joey Ramone backstage to pick his brains.

While the New York and English punks were battling for recognition, across America small punk scenes were emerging from the woodwork: Athens, Akron, and especially the West Coast. It was at the Mabuhay Gardens, a small club in San Francisco's sleazy red-light and tourist district, and in the suburbs of Los Angeles, courtesy of Rodney Bingenheimer's weekend radio show on KROQ, that hardcore was born. The West Coast punks hated the New York scene's artsy-proppy aspects, exemplified by the Patti Smith Group, Television, and Talking Heads, leaning more to the angst and fashion of the Sex Pistols and the cartoon absurdism of the Ramones. By the time the Sex Pistols burned out in San Francisco's Winterland in 1978, the West Coast punks were emerging with a sound of their own. But their efforts to get their sound heard were to no avail. The media were declaring punk dead and claiming new wave was the next big thing. It was as if the California kids had waited for their shot at what was behind door number one, door number two, and door number three, only to step up beside Monty Hall and be told Let's Make a Deal had been canceled. As new wave music became stylized commercial techno-pop, these new punks responded by becoming even noisier and nastier than their predecessors. They would become hardcore.

Oh no! No one told us you'd be joining us! Dee Dee Ramone waited when I turned up backstage at a Ramones concert in Boston, rolling his eyes for effect and cautioning me about getting too drunk. While I had been friends with the Ra-



mones for years, Dee Dee and I had never become what you would call pals. He was forever warning me about the evils of drugs and drink but never seemed to too even a keel himself. Dee Dee is a living enigma, one moment looking as humble and simple as St. Francis of Assisi and the next as nervous as a death-row con about to take his walk to the chair.

"You really should get on some kind of program before you die," Dee Dee said as I grabbed a beer out of an ice-filled garbage can. He sat down to answer my questions about hardcore.

"The difference between punk and hardcore is that hardcore is more sophisticated, in a way. It's a newer form of punk. It's played a little more adventurously. The vocal style is always angry. I like that. The music is more aggressive. I can't really relate to a lot of their lyrics. I like Suicidal Tendencies because of their lyrics. But some hardcore groups have pretty dumb lyrics, which are sort of juvenile. BUT I DON'T LISTEN TO IT FOR THE LYRICS! I LISTEN TO IT FOR THE ENERGY AND THE FEELING!"

Dee Dee was the first of the Ramones to embrace hardcore, partly as an act of contrition for flirting with misanthropic imagery on their first few albums. While his lyrics aren't exactly a rallying cry for another thousand-year Reich, Dee Dee has stated in some interviews that his message may have been misconstrued. Dee Dee spent his preteen years playing in the rubble in postwar Berlin, where he discovered old relics that his parents used to scold him for bringing home. These relics were Nazi artifacts.

These days Dee Dee has done a 180-degree turnaround, committing himself to the anti-fascist and anti-totalitarian aspects of hardcore and writing clear-cut songs that no one could misinterpret. In "Planet Earth 1988" Dee Dee writes, "I pray for peace more than anything."

Dee Dee soon grew bored with political theorizing and abruptly turned the conversation to sex.

"I don't think these guys have sex."

"They don't have sex?"

"Hardcore girls aren't really interested in sex. They're just interested in being friends with everyone. Everyone just wants to be friends. Because if they were interested in sex, they wouldn't dress the way they do. They don't make themselves look sexually attractive. I think they do it because they don't care about sex. They hate love. The guys don't want to find a girlfriend and fall in love. They just want to slamdance. The guys wanna be alone with the guys and go to wild hardcore shows and get

all their violence out by slamdancing and jumping off the stage and all that stuff."

Then, as the conversation turned to the practicalities of the business end of music, Dee Dee fell into a depression.

"Nobody even cares about hardcore, it's not fair. I think it is the hope of rock 'n' roll. They are the only ones playing loud, raw music! Those heavy metal groups just play formula stuff. It all sounds the same."

"Don't hardcore groups sound the same?"

"Hardcore groups are supposed to sound the same. Ya hafta be clever to do something original. In hardcore the songs are hard to write because they hafta follow certain rules. And they hafta be written in certain styles, real limited styles. And if it's not done in the right way, it won't sound hardcore. It's hard for the hardcore groups to get jobs. Then when they get the jobs, the police come to the show and they see a bunch of punks and skins gathering and they want them to leave. Hardcore people are very discriminated against. The violence of the shows is started by the police. It shocks the band more than it shocks the kids. They're just used to the police force being like that that it doesn't even faze them. They don't like it, though."

Dee Dee, staring off into space, gave the impression that hardcore fans had been persecuted since the beginning of time. There was a long silence. Then he said, "I don't think rock's gonna last much longer. Hardcore is gonna hafta run its course pretty soon. It can't be experimented with that much more. It is already not

"Hardcore is already not shocking anymore," says Dee Dee Ramone. "It's been done. You gotta be really good to be shocking."

shocking anymore. It's been done. You gotta be really good to be shocking. When I was young and I went to rock 'n' roll concerts, I saw groups like the Stooges and Alice Cooper and the Dolls, Slade, stuff like that; earlier on I saw the Doors and Jimi Hendrix. That was really rock 'n' roll! Now whatta they got for a Jimi Hendrix? They got that Prince guy—he's trying to be the new Jimi Hendrix!"

Dee Dee's knuckles went white as he lashed out at the obscenity of Prince passing himself off as one of Dee Dee's heroes.

"How can he be the new Jimi Hendrix? The guy's a midget! Whatever he is, he doesn't make the kind of music that would excite me as a kid the way Hendrix did—with that violent, vicious guitar style! I don't even know what the midget is singing about. My favorite hardcore group is Suicidal Tendencies because they sing about problems you can relate to. They sing about someone's mother coming into some kid's bedroom and accusing him of being on drugs—and the kid wants to be left alone. And the parents accuse him of being crazy. They sing about the frustrations of being young."

The following evening, at the Agora Ballroom in West Hartford, Connecticut, Joey Ramone and I sat down to talk. Joey prepared for his performance by downing his regulation quota of a gallon of coffee.

"So you want to know what I think of hardcore? I think hardcore's good because it's the next generation and this is their form of expression. They're getting out their aggressions and frustrations and that whole bit, so

it must be good. I mean, I guess it's good if you're into it," Joey laughed.

"Hardcore is an alternative to mainstream and everything else. It seems to me to be geared for younger kids, 15-, 16-year-olds. It isn't exactly my forte, but I support it because I know how hard it is for these kids to get a break. I think it's, like, youthful and vital—to get somebody's mental health; otherwise it wouldn't exist!"

I asked Joey if he was very friendly with his hardcore fans.

"I'd like to be," he said. "But the only time I see them is when I'm kicking them off the stage."

Three hours later, Joey was onstage singing "Cretin Hop," and I was standing on a chair in the middle of the audience screaming out the words with everyone else when a large wave of slamdancers hit me, my head bounced against a table, and I landed on the floor.

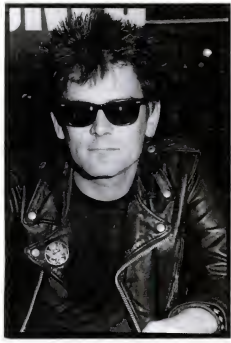
I'd been wondering how to introduce myself to the hardcore fans, but when I picked my bleeding head off the floor, the crowd of kids that lent me a hand made introductions unnecessary. I thanked them by buying them a round and introducing them to the Ramones. Two days later a contingent arrived at my house after taking the train in from the suburbs: Don Vansal and Phil McElroy, two studious-looking guys from the now-defunct hardcore band Vic Morrow's Head; Laura Solitaire, a plump, coquettish valley girl of a punk; and Marc Littell, a skinny malcontent with a bright red mohawk who seemed to prefer drinking beer to all other activities hardcore has to offer. Joining them a few minutes later was Malcolm Dydo, a shy but confident skinhead who had decided to let his hair grow in—but just a bit.

Don, the lead singer of Vic Morrow's Head, started the conversation.

"Black Flag and Fear were the first groups to really grab hardcore and make it into the most punishing form of music known to man. They used to come and play in Phoenix all the time, but I was only 13, so I never got to see them."

As they threw in their comments about their fave raves—the Damned, the Sex Pistols, the Ramones, Sid Vicious—I became acutely aware of our age difference. Their average age was 16, making them an average of 8 years old when punk exploded in 1977.

"We don't like to be categorized. We listen to and play hardcore. I guess if you had to call us anything,



A large, dark, textured Godzilla monster with a wide, toothy grin dominates the center of the poster. Its massive hands are positioned on either side of a city skyline at the bottom, which is being crushed and set on fire. A blue and white train is being crushed under its right foot. In the upper left, several fighter jets are flying in formation, leaving white smoke trails. The background is a dark, stormy sky.

There goes the neighborhood.

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you could call us punks."

"Breakdancing is just a new way to sell disco music."

"I walked into a record store the other day and they were selling Duran Duran batteries, for Christ's sake! If that isn't sick I don't know what is!"

"There is no heavy metal anymore."

"MTV is just one way of the record companies making rock 'n' roll antisepic again. MTV sucks because it forces you to accept what visions the corporations want you to have. I want to have my own visions. I don't want anyone telling me what to think."

When a lull finally came I asked them if there was anything wrong with making money.

"Not as long as you're true to yourself," they all agreed. That sentiment reminded me of the time a friend of mine found a college paper written by a classmate of hers named Gene Klein. In the paper, Gene mapped out his strategy for becoming a rock star and all the influences—Japanese sci-fi movies, horror films, cartoons of his childhood—he was going to incorporate into his act to make it the biggest spectacle in rock 'n' roll history. Gene Klein remained true to himself and shortly after dropping out of school changed his name to Gene Simmons and became a superstar in the group Kiss. I told them the story, but Don remained skeptical. "Well, they only sing about girls and drugs and rock 'n' roll, and how important is that? That's just escapism! Making money is fine, but if you use rock 'n' roll to get laid and fuck chicks backstage, then you don't know what rock 'n' roll is all about!"

Since it was obvious I didn't know anything about rock 'n' roll, I switched the conversation to parents and their family backgrounds. At least I'd been a teenager once. For two painful hours I sat listening to how the regimentation of after-school jobs had driven these tortured souls to take a Veg-a-matic to their heads and declare themselves the modern rebels. Just when I was thinking that trying to get to know any of these kids was

a waste of time, Malcolm, the former skinhead, spoke up and put it all in perspective.

"I don't come from any fucked-up background," Malcolm started slowly. "I really like my parents a lot . . . Last summer I squatted all over the city. It wasn't that I was running away. I just kind of needed to get away and be with people I could talk to."

"My parents just think it's a phase. . . shaved heads, different colored hair, and they don't really approve or support it. It's more like they say, 'But what are you going to do next, Malcolm?' They don't get on my case

"My parents just think it's a phase," says one punk. "Shaved heads, different colored hair."

about it. They think it's a phase and that I'll grow out of it."

Not to be outdone by Malcolm's introspective moment, Laura burst in: "My mother complained because these guys," she said, pointing accusingly at Mohawk Marc, Don, and Phil, "are so lazy. They were hanging out at my house all last winter and none of them ever offered to shovel the walk!"

"What does that have to do with hardcore?" the accused rallied. "Yeah, what's that got to do with anything?" "We were gonna shovel your walk once, so tell

your mother to fuck off."

I knew that it would probably be from some godforsaken suburb that the ultimate hardcore band would emerge to turn rock on its ass again, becoming huge and commercially acceptable and forcing the kids to start from scratch once again. So it was time to go to the biggest suburb of them all—L.A.

The first time I went to L.A. I was beaten up by a skinhead punkette who attacked me because I was from New York, which in itself made me a "poseur." In spite of this, whenever I think of Los Angeles the first image that pops into my mind is that old *Life* magazine cover story on California Girls. One can always dream. So instead of doing my homework on the plane, I pulled out an old issue of *Penthouse* and let my fantasies run wild on a lustful pictorial of California Pet Mindy Farrar. Then I made the mistake of reading the text accompanying the photos:

"I'm the kind of square who gets up at 6 AM, wears normal clothes, and goes to a secretarial job. So it really burns me up to see modelcontents with purple hair and grungy black clothes slouch around acting superior."

I immediately lost all interest in Mindy and began wondering what punk was coming to when women even denounced it from their centerfolds. Surely punk couldn't threaten that much. I was wrong.

It was during the in-flight movie, Superman, when the arch-villain Lex Luthor started buying up desert property because he planned on nuking the San Andreas Fault, thus sending California sliding into the ocean, that it all came clear. Real estate! Just like in the movie. The reason Mindy Farrar was waging war against the punks was because she and the rest of hard-working, middle-class America didn't want their property devalued and their insurance rates to skyrocket just because a punk club had suddenly sprung up down the street.

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In Manhattan and London, the punks had never been faced with the property-value problem because the neighborhoods where they played were worth shit anyway, and whatever meager cash the punks brought in was a boost to the economy. In New York the locale was the Bowery, and the Ramones were better than the bums from the men's shelter on Third Street.

But to homeowners in Los Angeles, the mega-suburb of them all, tolerating hardcore and its army of punks would have been the same as inviting Charlie Manson and his family to move in next door. In L.A., real estate is worth more than gold, and even the trashiest neighborhood could someday be worth trillions if the right backers were found to invest in it. Maybe if the hardcore innovators had chosen to set up shop in Watts or East L.A., they would have been left alone. But hardcore was rooted in middle-class white America. So when hardcore exploded, it did so in "white" areas—warehouse basements, former Chinese restaurants, and what had once been the ethnic bar around the corner. The community was quick to respond. While hardcore had the First Amendment and life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on its side, property owners had the cops.

I couldn't help but think that hardcore's sense of urgency had been brought about by the cops and that through police harassment, hardcore had become politicized. While the first punks were happy to tear around town in black leather jackets and safety pins, getting fucked up at a different party every night, the hardcore bands that endured, like Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, and Circle Jerks, had made a conscious effort to become a real alternative to rock 'n' roll. Instead of singing about partying, the message was now against corporate fascism, rock star misogyny, and the arms race and for human rights. For good or bad, punk had finally grown up.

But the established media are still fixated on hardcore's violent imagery. During the week I was in L.A., the local television news each night did an in-depth five-minute exposé on the hardcore threat. All through the day, when my favorite reruns broke for commercials, the station would run promos for that night's segment with some sensational quip like: "Hardcore—Children in Dog Collars or Animals Unleashed? A live report at 6." The live report at 6 would always show some wasted punk slurring his or her words, a rummage sale of old footage from other youth movements, a minority female newscaster, and two male marquis newscasters chuckling back and forth to one another

Slamdancing skinheads would rather die out there on the dance floor than watch quietly.

after the scoop:

"Gee whiz, Biff, if I ever produced offspring like that I'd just shit!"

"I know what you mean, Roger. I saw one of those punk girls the other day outside the supermarket, and I wouldn't have fucked her with a 10-foot pole."

"Ha, ha, ha. Well, coming up next: more death and destruction, and a touching story about how a Cabbage Patch doll saved 87 people from an inferno in Malibu."

If you doubt the severity of the media's and the L.A. PD's overreaction, note that Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates proclaimed on CBS's "Face the Nation," after the Philadelphia cops destroyed a city block to remove the MOVE people, that Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode was "an inspiration to the nation" and that he hoped Goode would run for national office.

Chief Gates went on to say, "He's jumped on my heroes list and, by golly, that's a short list." According to the L.A. Weekly, 56 clubs have been forced to close because of constant police harassment in and around L.A. County, and memes claiming that punks love to roll around on broken glass and use razor blades on themselves while slamdancing have circulated in some police departments.

Geza X rightly deserves the title of "Wizard of Hardcore," and no one person has done more to unleash its fury on the rest of the world. A virtuoso guitar player, acid casualty, student of crowd manipulation, studio engineer, and comedian, Geza was the logical choice as the guy who could capture the raw energy of hardcore and commit it to vinyl. Among his credits as producer are: "No God," the Germs; "Kill the Hippie," the Deadbeats; "Babylonian Gorgon," the Bags; "Holiday in Cambodia" and "Too Drunk to Fuck," the Dead Kennedys; "Six Pack," Black Flag; and a list

Jimmy Gestoap of Murphy's Law: To stomp or not to stomp, that is the question.

of equally disturbing singles and LPs too long to mention. Of Hungarian descent, Geza was something of a child prodigy, teaching himself English at the age of 4, then reverting to incoherent babbling in his late teenage years. His strict Catholic upbringing drove him mad, but he claims to have rescued his mental health by becoming a world-renowned psychiatrist at the age of 12. It didn't matter that it was his own little world he became renowned in. At the same time that he was discovering his own theories of behavior modification, he picked up a guitar and saved himself.

In the early '70s he placed an ad in Rolling Stone's free musicians' classifieds that read, "Shitty lead guitarist seeks uncoordinated macrobiotic Martian mutant to play rotten music." Geza received lots of calls from various musicians who told him, "Yeah, man, I just wanna jam some blues." When asked by his mother why he kept hanging up on the callers, Geza explained that his message was written in code and that only the right person would be able to decipher it; he then proceeded outside to the backyard to listen via an oscilloscope to an LSD-fertilized plant that he was convinced was trying to communicate with him. It wasn't until Geza returned home from a weekend retreat that he found Kim Kommit's name and number at the top of the list of calls his mom had taken and decided to give him a ring. It was the beginning of a love and neurotic relationship. Geza resembles an Adam Ant who has just recovered from a long bout of acne, and Kim is a tall, blond beach bum type who looks more like a lifeguard than a rock star. While Kim and Geza resembled an L.A. version of the odd couple, they both shared a passion for the possibilities of rock 'n' roll. Geza is credited with being the foremost expert on hardcore, but it was Kim Kommit who turned him on to punk.

"Kim just knocked me over with his concepts of how rock bands should behave and look. He absolutely went the whole scenario of punk rock," Geza was quoted as saying in *Damage Magazine*.

"Now that's a real tall claim. I'm sure everybody and their brother are claiming it, but then we went out and told everybody how we thought it should be over the next 7 or 8 years."

Kim found his inspiration in Iggy Pop and found himself in for a long and lonely dead zone before punk would come to L.A. In fact, Kim found the music scene so depressing, he holed up in a cabin in the woods for a few years, waiting for the rest of the world to catch up. In his spare time, he worked as a welder and Geza to J&B and was living in his own purgatory, working as an engineer in a studio that was recording mariachi, gospel, and disco bands.

"In those days I was thinking that civilization had ended with Blue Cheer. Then the Ramones came along," said Geza.

"The Ramones were really the first wave before the First Wave. They were the only band at the time that came close to what Kim had been talking about in 1970. There was a small 'scene' after the Ramones played the Whiskey, and it was really started by Helen Keller and Trudy, two L.A. scene-makers whose outlandish Catwoman clothes and hairdos gave it a look of its own."

It was around this time that Geza met a professional L.A. answer to CBGB's, came into its own. Geza joined the house band, a group of people who wore paper bags over their heads and were aptly named the Bags. It was after a show with the Bags at the Masque that the legendary Darby Crash (legendary because he would die of an overdose, elevating him to cult status) of the Germs approached Geza and asked him to produce their single. Geza thought the Germs were a bunch of snot-nosed spoiled brats, but against his better judgment agreed to the project. Once inside the studio, Geza found Darby and the rest of the Germs to be curious amateurs who gave him complete freedom and their full cooperation. Though Geza became a sought-after producer because of his punk professionalism, whenever he tried to join a band, his take-



“Light my Lucky.”



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charge attitude was history by the other members, securing him a place in legend as the guy who got thrown out of almost every hardcore band in L.A. His only recourse was to team up again with Kim, who had been terrorizing the Los Angeles beachfront suburbs with his psychedelic "Now I want to be your moon-doggie!" angst. If nothing else, Geza X and Kim Kommit had convinced the world that L.A. could match the London and New York punk scenes and go one better. They had been the movers and shapers of the original hardcore scene, so I asked them what they thought the future held.

"I can't really predict what's going to happen to either the 'hardcore movement,' if there is a movement, or to the individual kids. I can say what's happening to me and to a lot of the bands I know. I think the dedication of the newer bands is even more fierce and they are somewhat more knowledgeable about what is going on in the music industry than the original bands, who thought they might luck out and get some industry support and get to spread their filth across the United States. The newer bands have an urgency and a better sense of realism without that feeling of defeatism. They know what they're up against and they're going to play their crummy garage music anyway, regardless of what anyone thinks. That spirit is what makes the thing go," Geza said admiringly.

Later I was introduced to Helen, the proprietor and manager of the Anti-Club. An attractive earth mother of the hardcore scene in her mid-50s, Helen is the most knowledgeable club owner to speak on the issue of violence, since she grew up in French Tunisia during World War II. Helen moved to the American Midwest in 1955, almost from her ass off, and then decided that L.A. was the right climate for her North African blood. By 1978 she was the proud owner of a Mexican restaurant on Melrose Avenue, but she didn't involve herself in show business until her kids formed a group and had nowhere to play. She convinced the tenants of the Mexican restaurant to let the punks have a chance to fail. The Mexicans couldn't bear the noise, and before long Helen found herself owner, manager, holder of a liquor license, and friend to the punks.

"I had no alternative but to keep doing what I was doing. It put me off at first. I thought maybe they were hard people, with all their spikes and chains; they used to scare me to death. Then I started to talk to them and found out they were just like anyone else. They needed somewhere to express themselves, so I kept the place."

"Gee whiz, Biff, if I ever produced offspring like that I'd just shit."

"Did the pseudo-Nazi fashion of hardcore bother you?"

"No, because I know it's a put-on. The swastikas bothered me a little, but I learned it was just a fad." Putting her thumbs under her belt, pulling upwards in an imitation of the Marlboro Man, and laughing uproariously, she continued, "A way of showing off. They don't think they're Nazis, they just think it's tough. Every subculture has a different dress and a different code. At

first, it would bother me when they dressed up like Nazis, but I would remember their faces and watch them change over the years. And when they'd dress like something else I would go up to them and say, 'Hey, what happened to your uniform? What did you do with that?' And they would say, 'Well, it got old real quick.'"

As if to herald the new age of optimistic irony, the band Stukas Over Bedrock climbed onto the Anti-Club's stage and summed it all up in their hit song, "Bedrock Bedlam":

Let's tune into Bedrock
For the stone age family
The Rubbles and the Flintstones
In one million BC

Barney beats on Betty
Fred's in Raleigh Hills
Dino has been neutered
Pebbles' on the pill

It's Bedrock Bedlam, Bedrock Bedlam

Bam Bam is on acid
Fred can't get it up
The house is sitting over
A toxic chemical dump

It's Bedrock Bedlam, Bedrock Bedlam

Dressed only in oversize jockey shorts that looked like old-fashioned diapers, lead singer Ken "Clean Air Machine" screamed out the lyrics, scratching his nuts when he could find them, and looked a bit overwhelmed by the appreciative audience.

For a generation of kids who were just reaching puberty when Sid Vicious was being cremated and who felt cheated by the flash and mindlessness of technopop and heavy metal, hardcore offers not only a musical alternative but also a challenge to any young punk to unholster his or her ax and go one better. Hardcore kids remain one of the last bunch of outlaws on a vanishing frontier. It's nice to know that "We Are the World," but I miss the good old honesty of Jim Morrison singing, "Father, I want to kill you." It wasn't long ago that rock 'n' roll was dangerous. The safer rock becomes, it seems, the more momentum builds for hardcore and the more it sustains itself in the raw power of amateurish and frustrated belligerence. Rock 'n' roll lives.



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KDU Kean University
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WVU West Virginia University
WNIU Western Illinois University
WNU Western Northern University
WLNU Lincoln College
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WVMS University of Massachusetts
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WABM Bridgewater College
WFLP Fairleigh S. Dickinson
WDM Washington State University
WMLN Curry College
WJZ New Jersey State University
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WVU Western Michigan University
WMC Central Michigan University
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WSCC Brooklyn College
WSCAC SUNY—Corland
WMSC Queens College
WCPCC Vassar Post College
WHBU Polk County University
WISC Illinois College
WFTF Florida Institute of Technology
WOVNT SUNY—Oswego
WPST SUNY—Poughkeepsie
VVCB Vermont College
WRUR University of Rochester
WETI Rochester Institute of Technology
WELC Union College
WNHS Syracuse University
WNHS Union College
WOOR Ohio University
WNYU New York Institute of Technology
WFUV Fairleigh Dickinson University
WFLU Furman University
WKUU Kent State University
WTBU Tufts University

WVU *Virginia Polytechnic Institute*
WAMU *Washington State University*
WES *San Diego State University*
WCTC *Central Michigan University*
WCU *Western Washington University*
WVBU *Wayne State University*
WVHC *Webster-Wolford College*
WVUO *Wayne County State University*
WVU *West Virginia University*
WVUW *West Virginia Wesleyan University*
WVSM *Ohio State University*
WVSM *Ohio Wesleyan University*
WVU *West State University*
WVSC *West Virginia State University*
WVU *West Virginia University*
WVSC *Central State University*
WVSC *Central State University*
KSU *Kent State University*
WVSC *Northampton Community College*
WVSM *Western Michigan University*
WVSC *Eastern University*
WVSC *Western College*
WVU *University of Pennsylvania*
WVBU *Ball State University*
WVSM *University of Pennsylvania/Econ*
WVU *University of Pennsylvania*
WVU *Drexel University*
WVU *Lehigh County Community College*
WVU *Susquehanna University*
WVU *Pennsylvania State University*
WVU *West Chester University*
WVSC *Kean's College*
WVU *York College of Pennsylvania*
WVU *University of Rhode Island*

YOHN Providence College
YOHM Florida State College
YOIM Bryant College
YOSC University of South Carolina
YOSD Tinle College
YASU Augsburg College
YUTK University of Tennessee
YVND Vanderbilt University
YUTS University of the South
KUT University of Texas—Austin
KXTX Texas Tech University
KWSU Baylor University
YVGN University of Virginia
WCHM College of William and Mary
WVUP University of Vermont
WCUA University of Wisconsin
KEUN Washington State University
KCMU University of Washington
WUPS University of Puget Sound
KUFS University of Kansas
WMSU Milwaukee School of Engineering
WVSE University of Wisconsin—Superior
WVBC Bowling College
WVPU West Virginia University

SPIN Radio Concerts are produced by Edward Ross; recording engineer is Steve Borker of BBAT; sound processing equipment is provided by Barcus-Berry Electronics, Huntington Beach, CA. Commercial stations may obtain recordings for free.

(212) 496-6100; college stations that seek to carry this Therapy For Communications, (212) 697-7800.

CBGB'S: SIGN OF THE TIMES

Landmarks come and go, but CBGB's, a cultural outpost, the Fort Apache of punk, remains a shrine.

Article by Joanna Lisaní and Annette Stark

Three US marshals stand vigil outside the door to the Hell's Angels' headquarters on East Third Street in New York. It appears there is a story here. The marshals visit once a month and stand outside the door for an hour. The US government owns this building, but nowhere is there a sign that says so:

This is a bad neighborhood that is not changing fast enough. On one of these streets littered with burns and dilapidated buildings, in the most dilapidated building of all, stands CBGB's. If you ask owner Hilly Kristal what he does to keep the riffraff out, he answers—in honest surprise—"They don't come in."

Does he make enough money to make it all worth it?

"I make enough money to live around the corner."

This afternoon there is a fight in progress at CBGB's. There appears to be a story here. Someone named Johnny Still is yelling about money, and Hilly Kristal is doing his best not to yell back. People in rock music usually shout. People in rock music usually are deaf by the time they reach Hilly's age. No one should yell at Hilly Kristal, because he speaks softly. He needs a sign yelling people he is not deaf. Johnny Still has been acting as booking agent for a lot of bands and charging them to play here. Many bands stopped coming because of this. They call and find out they could have booked themselves. This is no story. This is just another sign of the times.

To anyone who grew up loving this music, CBGB's is an institution. It's the high-school bar. It's all funk, and cool, and dank—a darkened dump. It's anti-architecture at its best. It stands for something, the same way the Empire State Building once stood as the tallest building in the world, but could just as easily stand for nothing.

The CBGB's sign outside on the awning is not the first thing you see from the street. The graffiti on the outside of the building is. It's etched perfectly into every brick. Most of it is just names of bands, but of the printing is perfect.

CBGB's was an idea that evolved. "I started it while I had another place on Thirteenth Street where we did country music," Hilly says. "I had the lease to this place, so I closed Thirteenth Street, and the idea was to do country, bluegrass, blues." CBGB.

"After a couple of months I realized that there just was not enough in country to really make the scene over here.

But I covered myself. The place's full name is CBGB and OMFGUG. The OMFGUG stands for "other music for uplifting gormandizers."



CBGB's has a black ceiling with water pipes running across it and neon signs hanging from it. The signs are very old. They are probably worth more than the entire space. Most of these bands are not available at the bar.

Hilly picked this place because it was, Hilly would give anything to own this building and get rid of the flophouse on the top floor. In the basement is storage space for the glass business next door. Hilly would give anything to own the basement, but the landlord won't surrender the space. Basements have always been an important part of rock 'n' roll.

There were no big clubs in New York in 1973. There was Max's Kansas City and that was it. CBGB's looks the same as it did in 1973 when Hilly did the only major renovations. He put up boards on the walls and fixed the floor under the bar. It used to slant like a sinking ship.

The sign. NO ONE UNDER 16 WILL BE ADMITTED WITHOUT PARENT OR GUARDIAN, is the first thing you see after you see Hilly's desk. Hilly's desk is a mess, cluttered with the signs of the names of all the bands that ever played here. Bands with names like Dead Boys, the Dictators, Suicide, Blondie, the Ramones, the Talking Heads, Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, the

CBGB's is an institution. It's the high school bar. It's all funk, and cool, and dark —a darkened dump. It's anti-architecture at its best.

Shirts, Dead Kennedys, Television, and Richard Hell and the Voidoids.

Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell were the first to come. They came by one Sunday in 1975 and came back every subsequent Sunday. Tom was dating Patti Smith at the time, so she started coming, too. Clive Davis signed Patti here. That got things going.

This is the place that a girl named Susan ran away to in the summer of '76. She ran away from home to "do for rock 'n' roll," and date key Ramone. She was at CB's for two years, then went home. She became a nurse and married a doctor. People outgrew this place. This does not bother Hilly Kristal one bit. There are always more kids.

Susan does not have a sign over, Hilly's desk.

On Sundays the kids still come. The

really young ones come with their parents. Some parents bring their kids because they used to come here themselves, but that is a story all its own.

Bands like the Egyptians, Crossfire Choir, and Modern Clix come because this is the place to make it, but playing here isn't always enough. "It's a frustrating thing. One night you have wonderful bands, and nobody even comes. Sometimes you have a less than mediocre band, and the place is packed. I think bands always come and think, 'We're wonderful and we're going to build up a following because we're good.' It's nice to hear that people think you're good, but unfortunately it's not enough in this business."

Hilly's policy is—and always has been—the only way to play here is to play your own music. "I don't think that any band made it because of here, but a lot of bands got their first gig here. Tom Petty, the Talking Heads." Of all the CBGB's bands it's the Talking Heads. Hilly Kristal is most proud of the Talking Heads.

"They did their own roadie work. They weren't too good for it. I would have been proud to manage them. They auditioned here, and I liked them initially. I felt they were very creative. They had energy. They toured all over the country in a Volkswagen with a U-Haul attached to it."

Hilly's planning to start a small record label which will promote music that is valid, but can't attract the major record companies. Hilly will provide the backing of a major label, and if the group should become successful the major could take over.

"So many artists make it and later the record companies drop them. I was talking today to someone about Judy Collins. Twenty years at Elektra, and they dropped her. I think she's one of the best writers of the folk-rock thing, but she didn't go gold or platinum so they dropped her. They had to. The major labels are a big business. Our albums will not be so high-priced either."

If Hilly Kristal could open another CBGB's anywhere in the world, where would it be?

"I would love to open a CBGB's in the middle of nowhere and hope I could get people to come." Which is exactly what happened. Hilly Kristal opened a club in the middle of nowhere and everyone came.

Owner Hilly Kristal, the Regime of punk, standing outside his funky, darkened dump, CBGB's, which stands for "country, bluegrass, blues." OMFGUG stands for "other music for uplifting gormandizers."

THE THOMPSON TWINS

THE FUTURE IS HERE
AND NOW.



THE NEW ALBUM, HERE'S TO FUTURE DAYS,
PRODUCED BY NILE RODGERS AND TOM BAILEY,
FEATURING "LAY YOUR HANDS ON ME,"
"KING FOR A DAY" AND "REVOLUTION."

PRODUCED BY ALEX SADKIN, NILE RODGERS AND TOM BAILEY.
MUSIC FOR ALL TIME, ON ARISTA RECORDS, CASSETTES & COMPACT DISC.

swatch PRESENTS THE THOMPSON TWINS TOUR FOR FUTURE DAYS.
WATCH FOR CONCERT DATES IN YOUR AREA.

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GREAT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF PUNK

© 1985, BY JOHN HOLMSTROM

1975-LOU REED SHAVES IRON CROSSES INTO HIS HEAD. RONA BARRETT CALLS IT "THE ULTIMATE FASHION STATEMENT."



LOU RECORDS "METAL MACHINE MUSIC," A DOUBLE ALBUM OF WHITE NOISE. ANGRY CONSUMERS STORM THE RECORD SHOPS.



THE RAMONES PLAY THEIR FIRST MAJOR CONCERT DATE-OPENING FOR JOHNNY WINTER. THEY'RE GREETED BY A CHORUS OF BOOS + BOTTLES.



1976-WAYNE COUNTY BASHES HANDSOME DICK MANITOBA (FRONTMAN FOR THE DICTATORS) OVER THE HEAD WITH A MICROPHONE STAND. WAYNE FELT THREATENED WHEN DICK SPAT AT HIM.



SID VICIOUS, THE SEX PISTOLS' #1 FAN, ATTACKS NICK KENT, ENGLAND'S PREMIER ROCK CRITIC AND AN EX-PISTOL, WITH A BICYCLE CHAIN, AND THREATENS HIM WITH A BOWIE KNIFE.



AT AN EARLY PISTOLS GIG AT THE 100 CLUB IN LONDON, SID VICIOUS INVENTS THE POGO (OR SLAM) DANCE BY JUMPING UP AND DOWN, BASHING INTO PEOPLE ON THE DANCE FLOOR.



THE RAMONES MAKE FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES IN SCOTLAND FOR PROMOTING GLUE-SNIFFING WITH THEIR SONG, "NOW I WANNA SNIFF SOME GLUE."



THE SEX PISTOLS CREATE WORLDWIDE SHOCK AND OUTRAGE AFTER AN APPEARANCE ON TV WITH BILL GRUNDY ON THE WEEKEND "TODAY" SHOW.



A 47-YEAR-OLD LORRY DRIVER KICKS IN HIS TV SET WHILE WATCHING THE SHOW.



BILL HALEY COMMENTS ON PUNK ROCK:

I THINK IT'S CARRYING THINGS **TOO FAR!** I'VE GOT A **TEENAGED DAUGHTER**, AND I WOULDN'T LIKE HER TO LISTEN TO SOME OF THE LANGUAGE THESE FELLOWS USED!



LATER, AT HIS CONCERT, A GANG WAR ERUPTS BETWEEN TWO RIVAL TEDDY BOY FACTIONS

ERIC BURDON GIVES HIS POINT OF VIEW ON PUNK:

PERHAPS THE **WARNING ASPECT** IS THE **QUASI-NAZI SPIN-OFF** FROM NEW YORK. HITLER WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY **PROUD** OF **CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, **INDY WARHOL**, **KISS**, AND THE **SEX PISTOLS**. IT'S WHEN IT GETS BEYOND THE **PLAYFUL SIDE**, AND **YOUNGSTERS** COULD PERHAPS BE **MANIPULATED** FOR **OTHER REASONS**, THAT THE **REAL DANGER** WOULD SET IN. HITLER WAS VERY MUCH UNDER THE **INFLUENCE OF WAGNER...**



PHIL COLLINS TALKS ABOUT THE SEX PISTOLS:

A FRIEND **VIDEOTAPE**D THE GROUP ON A **TV PROGRAMME**, AND **FOLLOWING** ALL THIS **PUBLICITY**, WE **PLAYED** IT **OVER** OUT OF **CURIOSITY**. ALL WE **FOUND** WAS A **COMPLETE LACK OF TALENT!**



1977- THE PISTOLS **SHOCK** ONLOOKERS AT LONDON'S **HEATHROW AIRPORT** BY **SPITTING**, **VOMITING**, AND **CURSING** AT **AIRPORT WORKERS**. A **CHECK-IN GIRL** FOR **KLM AIRLINES** SAYS:

THEY'RE THE MOST **REVOLTING PEOPLE** I HAVE SEEN IN **MY LIFE!**



EMI RECORDS FIRES THE SEX PISTOLS FOR **"AGGRESSIVELY OUTRAGEOUS PUBLIC BEHAVIOR."** (ALSO TO **PLACATE** **NERVOUS STOCKHOLDERS** AND **ANGRY PLANT WORKERS** WHO **REFUSE** TO **LABEL** THEIR RECORDS)

THE **TERMINATION** IS BY **MUTUAL CONSENT!** WE ARE **UNABLE** TO **PROMOTE** THE GROUP'S RECORDS IN **VIEW** OF THE **PUBLICITY!**



IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS, ON THE SAME NIGHT, PISTOLS **JOHNNY ROTTEN** AND **PHIL COOK** WERE **ASSAULTED** - **ROTTEN** BY A **BUNCH** OF **RAZOR-WIELDING TEDDY BOYS**, **COOK** BY **SIX MEN** WITH AN **IRON BAR**.



GOBBING (SPITTING) ON GROUPS REPLACES **APPLAUSE** AT **PUNK-ROCK CONCERTS**.



GENERATION X (FRONTED BY **BILLY IDOL**) **ANNOUNCE** THAT THEY'LL WEAR **DEFENSIVE HEADGEAR** TO **PROTECT** THEMSELVES FROM **OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCES**, WHO **ESCALATE** TO **BEER GLASSES + BOTTLES**.



NAZI DOG, **LEAD SINGER** OF THE **VILETONES**, **ANNOUNCES** THAT HE WILL **KILL** HIMSELF AT THE **END** OF THE **VILETONES' FIRST CONCERT** AT **MAX'S KANSAS CITY** IN **NEW YORK**.



ROGER DALTREY OFFERS HIS OPINION ON PUNK:

IT'S ABOUT **TIME** THE **YOUNGSTERS** **KICKED UP** THEIR **HEELS!** AND **MAYBE** THIS WILL LEAD TO A **MORE MELLOW ATTITUDE** IN **PEOPLE!** BUT A **LOT** OF THIS IS **GOOD OLD-FASHIONED ROCK+ROLL HYPE!**



LINDA RONSTADT GOES TO A RAMONES CONCERT:

I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE **WORDS!** I **LIKE PUNKER**, BUT IT HAS TO HAVE **SOME INTELLIGENCE!** THIS WAS SO **CONSTRICTED** I WOULD CALL IT **HEMORRHOID MUSIC!**



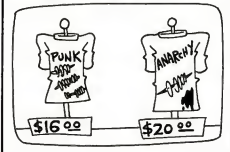
ZANDRA RHODES, ENGLAND'S MOST **INFLUENTIAL** **AVANT-GARDE** **FASHION DESIGNER**, CREATES **"HIGH PUNK"** **FASHIONS** **INSPIRED** BY THE **LONDON PUNK-ROCK MOVEMENT**.

IT'S A **REVOLUTION** THAT WILL **SWEEP** THE **WORLD** THE **WAY** THE **BEATLES** **DID!** **PUNK IS HERE TO STAY!**



(HER COLLECTION OF **GOWNS + DRESSES**, MADE FROM **RAYON SILK JERSEY**, INCORPORATING **CAREFULLY DESIGNED** **RIPE**, AND **JEWELLED SAFETY PINS** AND **RAZOR BLADES**, **SELL** FOR **\$345** TO **\$1,500** AT **BLOOMINGDALES**)

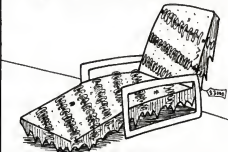
PUNK T-SHIRTS ARE DISPLAYED IN THE FRONT WINDOW OF MACY'S. SAKS FIFTH AVENUE SELLS T-SHIRTS WITH SHREDDED SLEEVES, SAFETY PINS, AND FAKE BLOODSTAINS.



BONNIT TELLER SELLS GOLD SAFETY PINS FOR \$100.00 EACH. SIDNEY GABLER JEWELLERS, IN CHICAGO, SELLS DIAMOND SAFETY PINS FOR \$165.00 AND \$550.00.



RICHARD MAURO INVENTS AND MARKETS PUNK FURNITURE. A CHAISE LOUNGE, MADE OF AN OLD ARMY BLANKET AND COVERED WITH 1000 SAFETY PINS, SELLS FOR \$3,000 (\$3 A PIN).



THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON MEETS WITH TOP EXECUTIVES OF THE NATION'S MAJOR RECORD COMPANIES IN NEW YORK TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR A NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN ON PUNK ROCK.



JIMMY CARTER IS OVERHEARD TALKING WITH A GROUP OF RECORD COMPANY EXECUTIVES AT A JAZZ CONCERT ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN.



SEYMOUR STEIN, PRESIDENT OF SIRE RECORDS, A LABEL MANY PUNK/NEW WAVE GROUPS ARE SIGNED WITH, LAUNCHES A NEW PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN ON ALL SIRE PRESS RELEASES.



1978 - THE SEX PISTOLS TOUR THE STATES. SID VICIOUS ATTACKS A HECKLER WITH HIS GUITAR IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.



THE 1ST PUNK ART SHOW OPENS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. "THE SHOW IS A BORE," AND "PUNK ART IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE FRAUD," RESPOND CRITICS.



SID VICIOUS IS HELD ON \$50,000 BAIL FOR THE MURDER OF GIRLFRIEND NANCY SPUNGEN. MALCOLM McLAREN, STILL HIS MANAGER, OFFERS CLIPS OF SID SINGING "MY WAY" TO THE NEWS MEDIA.



1979-JOHNNY ROTTEN WINS HIS LAWSUIT AGAINST THE SEX PISTOLS & MALCOLM McLAREN. STEVE JONES & PAUL COOK ALSO SUE TO COLLECT THEIR SHARE OF THE \$1,760,000 THE GROUP EARNED.



BLONDIE, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL N.Y. PUNK GROUPS, HAS THE FIRST HIT RECORD BY A NEW-WAVE GROUP-"HEART OF GLASS"(AKA "THE DISCO SONG").



A "PUNK" RECORD BREAKS INTO THE U.S. TOP 40 FOR THE FIRST TIME-"CHIPMUNK PUNK," BY ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS.



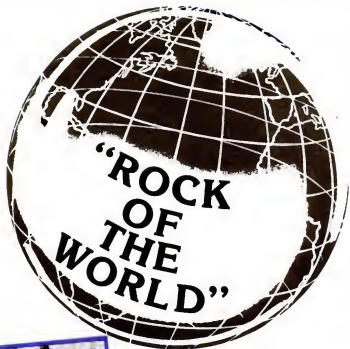
MALCOLM McLAREN EMBARKS ON A SINGING CAREER.

OTHER MUSICIANS ASSOCIATED WITH PUNK, INCLUDING LOU REED & THE CLASH, QUICKLY RELEASE DISCO SONGS.

**BARNETT
ROBBINS
ENTERPRISES**
presents



ABC



The most exciting new program on radio hits the airwaves this month as **"ROCK OF THE WORLD"** salutes the hottest superstars from England, Canada, Australia, Scotland and the USA! You'll hear exclusive interviews with such world-class performers as Tears For Fears . . . Sting . . . Dire Straits . . . Heart . . . Bryan Adams . . . Thompson Twins . . . John Cougar Mellencamp and More! Plus . . . All their #1 Hit Songs . . . The top 10 Hits of The World . . . Rock Lifestyle Reports . . . and the Best New Artists on The Charts.



JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP



BRYAN ADAMS

Be sure not to miss this terrific musical trip around the world!

Contact your local rock radio station for date and time in your area.

"ROCK OF THE WORLD"
Produced by Jim Hampton

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LEE JEANS
THE BRAND THAT FITS!



TEARS FOR FEARS



DIRE STRAITS

BRE is . . . Better Radio Entertainment!



Bob Gruen

Punk lives—
it just moved
someplace else.

Article by Scott Chrome and Punky Egbert

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PUNKS GONE?

Da, who cares? Half of 'em went back to college and the other half moved back to Minneapolis. Except Patti Smith. She moved to Detroit. Some punks went new wave. Some joined AA. Some never knew what hit them.

Sylvia Morales, who would just as soon spit in your eye as look at you, married Lou Reed and moved to suburban New Jersey, where she writes fiction.

Johnny Rotten moved to Elektra, Linda Ronstadt's label.

Johnny Thunders moved to Paris where it's cheaper, hit the reset button, and is ready to start all over.

Richard Hell, who married Patty Smyth of Scandal, played the corpse in *Desperately Seeking Susan*.

Tish and Snookie of the Sic Fucks still own Manic Panic on St. Mark's Place, probably the oldest punk boutique in the world, although word is rents are skyrocketing on their block.

Ace Punk magazine photographer Roberta Bayley enrolled in college and runs a travel agency. Stiv Bators joined the Lords of the New Church, but is now back with the Dead Boys, as is Chetach Chrome.

John Collins and Tony Machine, after a few mai-tais, started a band called the Delancey Street Hawaiians.

David Johansen went on *Miami Vice*. His alter-ego, Buster Poindexter, is New York's most beloved cabaret singer.

Alan Vega of Suicide is a solo artist on Elektra Records and his old partner Martin Rev is a solo artist on New Rose Records, but they're making a new

Suicide album.

Pete Shelley of the Buzzcocks had some solo hits, like "Homo Sapiens" and "Telephone Operator," while other members of the group formed the Professionals.

999 tried to go commercial, but are back to their old style.

**Richard Sohl is a fashion model.
Poly Styrene and Laura Logic
joined the Hare Krishnas. Darby
Crash of the Germs and Don
Vinyl of the Offs O.D.'d. Wayne
County is halfway to
becoming Jayne County.**

The Stranglers changed their style. Kristian Hoffman of the Mumps plays with Ann Magnuson in the Bleeker Street Incident. Robert Gordon is in a new Budweiser TV ad. Lenny Kaye of the Patti Smith Group recently produced Suzanne Vega.

lgy Pop (left) plays golf and got his P.G.A. card in the mail.

Richard Sohl of the Patti Smith Group plays with Nina Hagen sometimes, and with Romeo Void, Joy Ryder, and Elliot Murphy, when he's not too busy as a fashion model.

Anton Fier, drummer of the Feelies, is now a famous jazz musician.

Voidoid guitarist Robert Quine frequently plays with Lou Reed and Eno, and plays on Tom Waits's new album.

Billy Idol of Generation X is now Billy Idol.

Topper Headon of the Clash lives in London and has a new band. Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon have a new record, which may or may not be a Clash record, and Mick Jones has a band called Big Audio Dynamite with punk filmmaker Don Letts. They have a hot new album.

The Damned are as popular as ever. Captain Sensible had a No. 1 hit in England not too long ago.

Mary Harron, British correspondent for Punk magazine, works for British TV and is making a documentary about the Velvet Underground.

Jordan, who set a fashion standard for punk women which still stands and got a London Arts Council grant for looking like a work of art, married a rock 'n' roll manager.

Poly Styrene and Laura Logic joined the Hare Krishnas.

Darby Crash O.D.'d one week after the Germs reunion.

Ricky Wilson of the B-52's died of the Big C. Don Vinyl of the Offs O.D.'d just when the band was about to reform.

Bob Roberts of the Offs moved his tattoo business to Hawaii.

Anya Phillips died of the Big C.

Adny Shernoff of the Dictators works on Wall Street. His former bassist, Mark "the Animal" Mendoza, is in Twisted Sister. Dictator lead singer-roadie Handsome Dick Manntoba drives a cab but still looks great.

Wayne County is now halfway to being Jayne County.

Malcolm McLaren, former New York Dolls and Sex Pistols manager, commutes between Hollywood, where he's making movies about surf Nazis and fashion police, and New York, where he's staging "Fams," an opera, with impresario Joseph Papp.

When it's hot, Walter Stesting is painting in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

Penelope of San Francisco's the Avengers is either married or making a new record.

Lee Viny of Fear became an actor and plays tough guys in movies like *Get Crazy*, *Wildlife*, and *Flashdance*.

Susan Springfield, leader of the Erasers, works in the art department of *The New York Times*.

Minor Threat, who started "straight edge" in D.C., telling people not to drink, smoke, or even have sex, died in 1983 of Art Linkletter Disease—too much integrity. They put out three or four records; their goal was not to sell one.

Helen Wheels pumps iron, won the Miss Olympia bodybuilding crown, and has a part in the new Steven Spielberg film directed by Richard Benjamin.

Sid Vicious is dead.

BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE



Pioneers from all walks of rock, regrouped as Big Audio Dynamite. Here are former members of The Clash and the Basement 5. This is one of the '80s leading video directors.

"THIS IS BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE" Mick Jones, Don Letts, Leo "e-zee-kill" Williams, Greg Roberts, Dan Donovan.

An explosive debut album, on Columbia Records and Cassettes.

Produced by Mick Jones

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BECKER continued from p. 40

play the game competitively, and by 14 decide to give up high school and its social life to make a lifetime commitment to tension-strung gut and lint-wrapped rubber balls, who says he learns something from every match he loses; who's almost abnormally uninterested in the lucrativeness of being ranked fifth in the world and what that can buy—except that it means being able "to replace one or two Walkmans a week because," as Tirić says, "he's losing them all the time and can't live without music."

"Maybe I'll have a different opinion three or four years on the tour," says Becker emphatically, "but, at the moment, I'm not playing tennis for the money, as long as I don't want to buy a house, a plane, or a ship." But he qualifies that judgment: "Maybe the security you have from so much money is nice."

In Europe, where checkbook journalism is rampant, Becker was paid \$35,000 by a German magazine for an interview. He claims such proceeds have at times gone to charities for the disabled. And although he fails to mention it, he added \$63,000 to the \$12,750 the auction of his winning Wimbledon racket raised for mentally handicapped children.

He says his ultimate fantasy is "having a relationship with my children not like father and son—like friends. I always wanted to be proud of my father, but after Wimbledon I wasn't anymore, because I needed some help and I don't have so many friends. I thought my parents were very good friends, but they made some mistakes."

"After Wimbledon my father was giving press conferences and magazine interviews, and I said, 'Hey, man, you are my father, not my tennis coach. You can talk to me about electronics, or you can say when I have to go to bed—but not that you're talking to some journalist saying, 'He's playing good forehand.' That's not his job. We had a long discussion, and he found out I'm right. Now everything's OK.... In some ways, I already have more life experience than my father, and he's 50."

Becker's been called "warrior" and even "bully" when it comes to his increasingly assertive court behavior, but now he concedes: "Two years ago I was pretty bad-mannered on the court; throwing the racket, screaming, and worse. But then Ion, Guntzie, and me, we talked about this problem and we found out that when I'm losing my temper, for the next five points I'm not playing good tennis."

Becker maintains his Teutonic, clear-thinking pragmatism as our conversation moves into a discussion about off-court habits that have gotten in the way of more than one pro's game.

"People who are taking drugs need sometimes to be happy. I don't need drugs or alcohol to make me happy. But if anyone asks me [to try drugs], and Ion is going to know, they won't be happy again anymore." His voice is facetiously threatening.

"Would he use physical force?"

"Yah, maybe.... he's stronger than I am."

"How do you know?"

"We've had some fights," he chuckles, as I realize Becker, who in the early days was "afraid" of Tirić, has developed an unmistakable camaraderie with his mentor. It's also clear Rocky and the Rumanian Kambo have whiled away some of their off-hours in horseplay.

"So, he's stronger?"

"Until now, maybe," Becker explains, "but I'm getting stronger, he's getting older."

Even heroes have heroes, and I wonder who are some of Becker's.

He pauses—longer than any question has yet prompted him to—and appears to be more interested in continuing the interview than in leaving for the night's matches which have already begun.

"The Pope," Becker says thoughtfully, claiming he may be granted a private audience with John Paul II this year. Although he admits he's not a churchgoer, he says, "I want to see, I want to touch him. He inspires me. He seems like something else, not a normal human being." But of the Vatican he says, "Everything is too rich there."

That night at the Tulsa tennis "shoot-out" there's something superhuman about

"Two years ago I was pretty bad-mannered on the court, throwing the racket, screaming, and worse. But when I'm losing my temper, for the next five points I'm not playing good tennis."

Becker as he blitzes aces past Kevin Curran with the kind of ammo that has the corporate types in the box seats ducking when their teeth aren't chattering. Even CBS's Brent Musberger observed, "Coming against Becker's power is like taking on a Dwight Gooden fastball." He attacks every ball, because every ball counts.

And Golden Boy's got chutzpah, too. Since Wimbledon he's progressively displayed more of it. During this last match (tulsafunofficially billed as "Wimbledon II"), he questions a lineswoman's call. He walks up to the grey-haired official and, with his arm wrapped around her, sticks his face in hers and asks, "Are you sure?" He also wins the match.

Jimmy Connors once said, "There's no view like the view from the top," and while Becker still has more dues to pay before he gains admission to that club, his performances seem to say, "It won't be long now."

In the meantime, January's Nabisco Grand Prix Masters in New York—and the challenge of the top 16 singles players pitted against each other for a \$500,000 purse—awaits the phenom.

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STATE OF THE ART

Everything about cassette tape: from chrome to metal, from low to high bias



Column by Brad Baker and Edward Rosen

Cassette tapes have dramatically changed the recording and record business, the business world, education, journalism, and the home and car stereo market. Sales of prerecorded cassettes now surpass record sales, and some progressive musicians and producers are even using 4-track cassette recorders to produce master tapes for record companies.

However, the common cassette was not commercially available prior to the mid-'60s. During the '50s, Garrard, a British company, produced a cartridge consisting of two reels of $\frac{1}{4}$ " tape sealed inside a plastic shell—nothing more than two of the regular open reels commonly used on reel-to-reel tape recorders. Garrard had visions of there someday being a tape changer—like a record changer—that would play large cassette tapes. Garrard's invention was cumbersome, costly, and ahead of its time. In the mid '60s, North American Philips patented the $\frac{1}{2}$ " cassette (cassette is a French word that means "casket, case").

There are three basic types of cassette tapes available: normal, which is low bias and equalized at 120 microseconds; chrome dioxide (CrO₂), which is high bias and equalized at 70 microseconds; and metal particle. Metal tapes are technically the best you can buy. However, you can use a metal tape only in a machine that has a special metal setting. In any other machine, the tape won't erase, and can damage the tape recorder heads.

Chrome (high-bias) tapes are superior to normal low-bias tapes. They provide better signal-to-noise ratio, greater fre-

quency range—generally another 12db of high-end signal—higher quality base material, and usually better mechanical parts (rollers, tape-guides, and headshells). Now that cassettes are sold everywhere, from drug and grocery stores to stereo and record shops, the price of a good chrome cassette is seldom more than \$1.50 above the price of a normal, low-bias cassette.

If you are recording music from any source other than radio, it is best to use chrome tape. In addition to the other advantages, there is less oxide residue shed on your tape heads and usually better tape alignment inside the shells.

For recording music from radio, normal tape is sufficient, because the frequency range of the original music is reduced before transmission. Also, normal tape is more than adequate for most voice recordings, such as dictation, meetings, lectures, interviews, and from the telephone. A chrome tape will not produce a better recording of this material. Though chrome is technically better than normal tape it will not automatically produce better recordings. Recording from normal low-bias tape to chrome will not produce a better-sounding tape than the original. The source material must have good frequency range and signal-to-noise ratio and the tape recorder must have a variable bias switch; without these elements chrome tape, regardless of its price, won't sound much better than normal tape.

Voice material may sound better on chrome because cassette manufacturers produce better cassette shells for the

higher-priced chrome tapes. Better shells and mechanical parts are almost as important as high-quality tape stock in determining the kind of reproduction you get because they provide better tape alignment during recording and playback and reduce wow, flutter, head wear, and jamming.

It is difficult to list the best cassette tapes because: (1) the quality of cassettes is constantly improving; (2) all manufacturers know what the others are making; (3) some tapes perform better than others on certain machines; and (4) tape that has great technical specs but is put in a cheap shell generally will not produce good recordings.

Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs (MFSL) manufactures limited-edition, state-of-the-art albums and cassette tapes recorded directly from original master tapes of such acts as Billy Idol, the Rolling Stones, and Hall and Oates. MFSL president Herb Belkin says he only uses BASF high-bias chrome tape (in a specially designed shell) because he found it to be "the most sonically accurate and quietest in terms of greatly diminished background noise."

Robert Drake, a technical and audio consultant to Panasonic, the Hard Rock Cafe, and record producers such as Nile Rodgers, recommends and uses only Sony's UXS chrome tape. Drake particularly recommends UXS tape for use with the Sony Pro Walkman, the only portable cassette recorder that performs to the specifications of good chrome tapes.

Denon has been producing cassette tapes since 1967, and their CrO₂ tape is preferred by Steve Barker, president of Barker Brothers Audio Technology and technical director of the SPIN radio programs. "Denon's chrome has the most total balance from low to high frequencies," Barker says, "and their shell is truly among the best."

TDK, Maxell and others also have their distinguished fans. The best tape test is to buy each manufacturer's top-of-the-line CrO₂ tape and record the same music (preferably classical, which has greater frequency range than rock) on each tape and play it back. Whichever tape sounds best is the tape you should use. Sony's tape should sound best on Sony machines because Sony precisely matches the bias of its tapes to its machines. Other tapes might be better suited for other machines.

There are several other things to consider when recording on or playing cassette tapes. Many cassette recorders are equipped with one of a number of sound processing systems, such as Dolby B, Dolby C, or dbx. Dolby B is the older of the two Dolby systems and provides 10 db of noise reduction. Dolby C is more severe and imposes 20 db of reduction, and dbx provides the most noise reduction—30 db—but is more flexible (providing better highs) than Dolby, which means it is probably the best system for cassettes.

To use noise reduction systems, just set the switch for the system available and record. Whenever you play the material, use the same noise reduction system. Most cheap or low-quality cassette tapes, blank or prerecorded, are very noisy and have a lot of hiss. Many people are under

the impression they can eliminate noise or hiss by playing tapes through the Dolby or dbx system, even though the original material wasn't recorded on such a system. However, not only do you eliminate hiss or noise, you also reduce frequency response with these systems. The material will sound compressed and dull. Conversely, if you play a prerecorded Dolby tape without the Dolby noise reduction system, the sound will be harsh, bright, and somewhat scratchy in the middle and high frequencies. If you play

Cassettes are truly revolutionary tools: portable, inexpensive, easy to duplicate, simple to mail—music for the people, whenever and wherever they want it.

dbx-encoded material without dbx, it will sound compressed and any background noise from the original material will be accentuated. Noise reduction systems minimize tape hiss, which is usually more noticeable on classical or jazz recordings than on rock music. If you have a choice, use some type of noise reduction system, but remember, you will not enjoy its benefit if you don't use the same system for playback.

Great-sounding tapes are dependent on several other important but simple matters. It is very important to regularly clean the heads, guides, and rollers on your tape machine. At professional recording studios everything is cleaned several times a day. Low-quality tape deposits lots of oxide when it is played. High-quality tape leaves very little oxide. However, good tape used over dirty heads will not clearly play or record (just as if there is dust on the needle of your record player), so clean everything on the tape touches. The guides are more important than the heads. Plain rubbing alcohol from any drug store is better than any brand-name cleaner (which is usually just rubbing alcohol and some chemical agent). Use cotton swabs to clean all parts, including the side, but a cassette cleaning unit will prove adequate. Also be sure to demagnetize your cassette deck regularly. Companies such as Allisop and TDK make battery-operated cassette head demagnetizers which fit any tape recorder.

Cassettes are truly revolutionary tools: portable, inexpensive, easy to duplicate, simple to mail—music for the people whenever and wherever they want it. ☺



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"Me and the boys/Mode o pact/To live or die/No turning back/Scorred for life/All my best friends died/I lost my mind/It mode me hote/I can't escape, I can't escape . . ."

—Mötley Crüe, "Donger"

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Article by Sue Cummings

Photography by Neil Zlozower

"Vince Neil was nothing more than a tool—innocent, naive, and undereducated—who just wanted enough money to buy a sports car. Putting Vince Neil in that car is as much the fault of Warner [his record company] as the accident was his fault. My feeling is that Vince Neil was going out and living the kind of behavior he was supposed in."

—Jack Owens, attorney for Lisa Hogan

"We're the guys in high school your parents warned you to stay away from. That's what we're like onstage and off. The kids won't buy albums from phonies. They can see right through that crap. They'll run your ass out of the country if you aren't the real thing. We are the extremely real thing!"

—Nikki Sixx, bassist of Mötley Crüe

Doug Thaler and Doc McGhee manage the extremely real thing. They keep a tight rein and they've got white knuckles. Doug calls me to find out why I want to interview his band. Since "the accident" the barrage of questions never ends. Most of them come from magazines that don't cater to heavy metal audiences. "We're dealing with an audience ages 10 to 18, 22 if you want to push it," says Thaler. "I'm very particular about what I do and when . . . a number of things have occurred in the past year . . . we'd like to get a little bit further from some of our past problems . . . I don't feel that there's an up side to this. What angle is the story going to take?" Thaler's cautiousness is understandable. The Crüe is in hot water.

Of all the Los Angeles metal class of '82 bands to graduate to major label status, the Crüe has vied hardest for every superlative. They're heavy contenders for Loudest, Wildest, Rudest, and Most Successful. But there's one title they win hands down. The Crüe is the

Most Accident-Prone.

Bassist Nikki Sixx: "The whole point behind our anti-drinking and driving thing was that three very bad accidents happened. When we were recording *Shout at the Devil* [their second LP] I smashed my Porsche into a telephone pole at 70 miles per hour, completely shattering my right shoulder. I had to go in for a major operation and record the album at the same time. Tommy Lee [their drummer] rolled a 280-Z just before that, tipped it seven times off the freeway doing about 90 miles an hour. It was nasty. And then Vince, who was the soberest of all of us, hit a wet spot on the road, and two people were very, very injured and someone died."

The last, most widely publicized accident happened on the night of December 8, 1984 in Redondo Beach, California. Vince, out that night for beer, made a high speed left-hand turn and his 1972 Ford Pantera veered into oncoming traffic, hitting a Volkswagen driven by 20-year-old Daniel Smithers. Smithers and his passenger, 18-year-old Lisa Hogan, suffered severe head injuries; Hogan was in a coma for 28 days. Vince's passenger, Nicholas Dingley, the drummer for Hanoi Rocks who called himself Razzle, was killed.

Vince, who suffered only minor injuries, was found to be legally drunk. Seven months later, in a slack bar of back-room bargaining by his lawyer, Michael Nasatir, he pleaded guilty to charges of drunk driving and vol-

untary manslaughter and offered to do community service in exchange for an assurance that he would not go to jail. When the verdict came in, Vince got 30 days in jail and was ordered to pay Hogan, Smithers, and Dingley's estate a total of \$2.6 million in damages.

Two months after Vince's sentencing, Thaler arrived in New York on yet another leg of his weary journey to keep the lid on the thing, to keep the Crüe from any further collisions with oncoming traffic and bad publicity. Though Thaler alluded that *I might* be allowed to speak with the band he avoided making promises until he showed up in New York.

Thaler is too old to be a novice in the business. Before becoming a manager during the '60s he was a musician. "I played guitar for Ronnie James Dio in one of his earlier bands. The amazing thing now is that the Crüe's fans and Dio's are the same, the same age."

Thaler dresses like a rock executive—short, tie, and leather jacket. He has a long shag haircut, a conservative version of the band's dyed and sprayed hairstyles. He had been with them for the Canadian leg of their North American tour and followed them to Chicago before heading home to New York. But it was Vince's conviction, heightened in the public's mind by the Parents' Music Resource Center (PMRC) campaign against everything the Crüe stands for and the demand from the press for interviews that dominated Thaler's





"You ready, Nikki?" "Uh-huh." "Mick?" "Yeah!"
"Tommy?" "Okay." "Alright, fellas... LAST CALL FOR ALCOHOL."

what gets printed, is eight times more important than what gets played on the radio.

"People wasn't willing to cooperate with us, keep any of our secrets. We asked them what kind of photos they wanted. They said, 'Grab a couple chicks and roll around on the floor with them.'"

I probed for other answers without forcing an issue. "How many records are left on their contract?"

"I forget."

"Can I interview the band?"

"Obviously we had to keep a low profile until there was some disposition on [Vince's] case. You get people, witnesses, saying things like 'Well, I wasn't right there when it happened, but judging from the sound of the crash, he must have been doing at least 110.'" They start getting really creative on you. In the attorney's meeting there was a 62-year-old guy banging a *Hit Parade* on the table, quoting things about Vince's drinking habits from it."

In fact, the entire hearing/plea bargain/trial process was bizarre. July 17, the day of the plea bargaining, was a lesson in the theater of pain. Vince apologized to Lisa Hogan outside the courtroom, shook her hand, and told her he had been praying for her. A photographer snapped a picture of Vince dressed in a suit and tie and talking to Lisa. Lisa, her father, and Daniel Smithers attended the plea bargaining to show their agreement with the deal. Razzle's parents sent a telegram from Glasgow. Despite Mötley Crüe's success, the defense argued that Vince had no money for damages and needed to keep touring to pay. The prosecutor, deputy district attorney Burger Kelly, argued against sending Vince to jail, because Kelly said he felt Vince could teach kids about the consequences of drunk driving only if he did not become a martyr in their eyes.

"If you sent a hero of theirs to jail for a crime that involved no moral turpitude," said Kelly, "I think it would have a real adverse effect. They'd look up to this guy because they'd think he was treated unfairly. But if he were to go out and give a message that he felt what he did was wrong and he didn't want somebody else to do it—I think it could have a very strong impact."

During the 10 months leading up to the trial, the Crüe undertook the uncomfortable task of changing their clothes in public. Although last year one member was supposedly arrested for running down a hotel hall in his "party pants" (a G-string), now they tried to tone down the rebellion to impress the court that Vince was sorry. Kids liked Mötley Crüe as their favorite cartoon criminals, and now the court was supposed to believe that Vince would tell them, "Crime doesn't pay." Courts nationwide were cracking down on drunk drivers. Vince was facing up to five years in prison for manslaughter. The policy at Elektra was "no comment." Immediately after the accident, employees were threatened with firing if they spoke to the press. The company canceled a holiday-season promotion for a *Shout* at the Devil picture disc. Press inquiries about the band were referred directly to Bryn Bridenthal.

During the Theatre of Pain tour in the summer, shows began ending with a warning of "no comment." Increasingly, closing words onstage were often, "Don't drink and drive."

On September 20 Vince appeared for sentencing and to hear the judge's decision on damages. Although Bridenthal says Vince had been speaking to anti-drug and alcohol groups and that the band had donated \$75,000 to the Palmer Drug Abuse Program in Los Angeles, Vince's probation officer recommended he serve time. Testimony revealed that Vince's insurance would cover part of the money for damages. Vince was sentenced to five years probation with 30 days in county jail, the term to begin June 15. He was ordered to pay \$1.8 million to Lisa Hogan, \$571,000 to Daniel Smithers, \$200,000 to Razzle's parents, and to do 200 hours of

continued on page 81

mind. So Doug interviewed me about interviewing the Crüe.

"When we first signed with Elektra," says Thaler, "I was there when Bruce Lundvall [then president of Elektra] told us, 'We're not in the circus business.' So I said, 'Well, I am, got me out of here!'" That was in 1982, the beginning of the Crüe's career and Doug's career as their manager.

"You've got to deal with the human chemistry of the group. One of the guys goes out to his car and the license plates are stolen, and then the messages in lipstick written all over it. A year ago nobody paid him any attention, and he didn't like that either."

At the beginning of the band's notoriety, journalists seeking to publicize it were welcome. When Douglas Frost interviewed the band for *People* magazine during the summer of '84, she found they were more than willing to let down their guard.

"It was the end of the American tour, and they were getting ready to go to Europe and do Castle Donington and stuff like that for the first time," said Frost. "In one sentence Tommy would talk about sticking a firecracker up a cat as a kid. Then in the next sentence he's bragging about doing a similar trick with a champagne bottle to some girl. And Bryn [Bridenthal, the band's publicist] would say, 'Well, Deborah, I just leave the room when those girls are there.'"

"Vince sits there and brags to me about how big his liquor cabinet is, how he loves to drink. They all told me about all the accidents they'd been in. When I was there I saw how things got to the point where Doug and Doc took away the keys to the cars."

Later Frost's relationship with the band soured. "Doug Thaler said that having me with them was the worst mistake of his entire career." When Frost returned to New York with her interview tapes, the project stalled. The Crüe refused to pose for photographs, and the piece was never published. Last summer, the interview surfaced in the *Village Voice*, chronicling the Crüe, muller than ever. "The lawyers kept calling me every minute, questioning every other line in the thing," said Frost.

It was one more had character reference for Vince, who was then out on bail awaiting sentencing.

"We let this person from *People* speak to them," said Thaler, "and she turned out to be this bodybuilder. She looked like a man. The guys are real chauvinists—they think there's only one reason for a chick to be around. She was asking questions like, 'What was your real name before you started the band?' I've got a guy who wants to forget the first 25 years of his life, so what is that going to do? It's not going to sell me records, it's not going to sell them magazines. It's just going to hurt him. I work these guys hard; I work them five nights a week. I don't want that. In places like Japan what you say,



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moving images

Cisco and Egbert review new videos by Artists United Against Apartheid, Pat Benatar, the Starship, and Mick Jagger and old videos by the Clash and Rod Stewart, plus what to listen to while shopping for socks.



David Allen

CISCO: Hi, I'm Gene Cisco, rock video critic of the *Middletown Daily Mirror*.
EGBERT: And I'm Roger Egbert, rock video critic of the *Middletown Star-Tedger*. This month "At the Videos" we'll review videos by Platinum Blonde, the Starship, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, ABC, the Clash and Mick Jagger.
CISCO: But first here's Artists United Against Apartheid's "Sun City."
EGBERT: This video starts off with this travelogue about Sun City, which is like a South African Las Vegas. Is that Miles Davis?
CISCO: Judging from this travelogue, Sun City looks like a Cecil B. deMille movie set. It's the kind of place middle-class bigots can go and be surrounded by evidence of their success.
EGBERT: Bikinis behind barred wire. There's Run-DMC, Kurtis Blow, Afrika Bambaataa, Little Steven. There's Bono, Pat Benatar, Bruce, Eddie Kowalek, David Ruffin, George Clinton—he looks like Cochise—Joey Ramone, Jimmy Cliff. This is pretty heavy.
CISCO: This is everything the '60s were supposed to be. But it's never too late to protest apartheid.
EGBERT: There's John Hall and Lou Reed.
CISCO: All the people conspicuously absent from Live Aid. I think Stiv Bators from the Dead Boys is in this.
EGBERT: Grandmaster Flash, Todd Rundgren...
CISCO: Bob Dylan, Jackson Browne, Pe-

The Clash were like populist punks—the Springsteen of punk.

ter Wolf, the Fat Boys...
EGBERT: So who's going to play Sun City now?
CISCO: Loverboy?
EGBERT: Sun City is going to have to go strictly disco.
CISCO: This video is interspersed with documentary footage of what Sun City is really like. Aren't those attack dogs the police are using on the demonstrators gruesome?
EGBERT: This is powerful. It makes you think rock 'n' roll can do anything.
CISCO: What do Dylan who just kissed somebody?
EGBERT: That was Bruce. This video's got a real celebration feel to it.
CISCO: The other benefits were great but a little like wakes. You can dance to this one.

Mick Jones and Joe Strummer
of the old Clash

EGBERT: Wow! Look at those protesters dancing. It's heavy. It looks like Zulus dancing and scaring the shit out of the British army.
CISCO: Next we have Platinum Blonde, a Canadian band.
EGBERT: They look like ugly broads. This guy says, "I'm not going to be your fool no more." Let's see if he changes his clothes. The band looks like Rod Stewart's children, the same kind of foppish look. The girls in this video are into a much more natural kind of makeup than the boys. The guys have skinnier, more-plucked eyebrows than the girls. Did you notice that the girls have longer, healthier looking, more natural eyebrows? The guys' are plucked to death. Remember, they rented these girls.
CISCO: These girls are really the cream of the crop.
EGBERT: In their résumés, do these models say whose girlfriend they impersonated in what video?
CISCO: Do they just play girlfriends?
EGBERT: I think so. There seems to be trouble in paradise in this video. They're not getting along the way they should be. The girls keep looking at the chauffeur, as if they've got something going. If this band were to go prematurely bald, it would nip their career in the bud. I think there's more going on psychologically in this video

than meets the eye. These guys seem to be dissatisfied because their girls drove off with their servants. Servants with savings accounts, who don't spend so much money on makeup and hairdos.
CISCO: Next we have the Starship, "We Built This City." I never knew who was in the Starship since they were the Airplane. There are a lot of extras in this video. There's Abraham Lincoln, Jack Casady is definitely not in this one. There's Grace Slick.
EGBERT: She never looked so good. She's practically a senior citizen.
CISCO: Looks like she lost weight. Which cities did they build?
EGBERT: Well, there's Vegas with the New York skyline in the background.
CISCO: This isn't as good as the Airplane video where they set up their equipment and amplifiers on a midtown Manhattan rooftop at the height of rush hour and gave a surprise, traffic-stopping, free concert.
EGBERT: Was this before the Beatles gave a free concert on the roof of Apple Records?
CISCO: I think so. This was in the '60s.
EGBERT: Wasn't that a Godard film?
CISCO: Yeah, Godard should make rock videos. He's one of the great filmmakers. His stuff would be great for video.
EGBERT: Which bands would be good for Godard?
CISCO: Clash, Stiv Bators. Godard would probably be best with a heavy metal band. Now I think we're in for a Pat Benatar video. Yep, "Promises in the Dark."
EGBERT: It starts off looking like she's on *The Merv Griffin Show*.
CISCO: You know how people sometimes have films running through their heads? Maybe in her mind she's always on *The Merv Griffin Show*.
EGBERT: It could also be the 700 Club. That's that religious program. This video has sort of a religious feel to it, doesn't it?
CISCO: Yeah, they split the screen into three images of her, like the Holy Trinity. In one image she looks much younger than she is, in one she looks much older, and the third, I guess, is the way she really looks.
EGBERT: She's wearing the kind of outfit Mick Jagger wore 10 years ago.
CISCO: What's her background? Did she grow up in the suburbs?
EGBERT: She grew up on Long Island.
CISCO: Who do you think her inspiration is? Who's her hero?
EGBERT: She has Liza Minnelli hair and makeup here. This is an extremely unvideo-like video. I'm just waiting for the *Solid Gold* dancers to jump over the band's heads.
CISCO: This is the cheapest and simplest way for people without any ideas to make a video. No story, no drama, just make believe you're performing.
EGBERT: The best idea here is that the drummer has Rambo drums. He's got camouflage drums. That's a new one. Pat has the same moves as the lead singer in



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HAIL GODARD

He's a perpetual problem child, a genuine enfant terrible. He might not mean to, but Jean-Luc Godard always causes trouble—frustrating moviegoers who like their stories straight and ranking those who wonder why the women in his films can't seem to keep their clothes on. One fanatic at last spring's Cannes Film Festival went so far as to toss a shaving-cream pie into the face of the venerable French cineaste.

When Godard sauntered onstage at this year's New York Film Festival after a screening of his latest picture, *Hail Mary*, he wielded an umbrella. Was it, I wondered, to deflect debris he expected the audience to hurl his way? Perhaps this time it's gone too far: he's got himself in Dutch with the Catholic Church. Protesters around the globe picket theaters showing *Hail Mary*, and even the Pope has joined in the fray, denouncing the film as blasphemous.

Think what you will, Godard claims he didn't set out to provoke. "I think only press people can provoke," he tells me on the eve of *Hail Mary*'s American premiere, "and advertising and business people. I mean, to provoke is no work for a moviemaker."

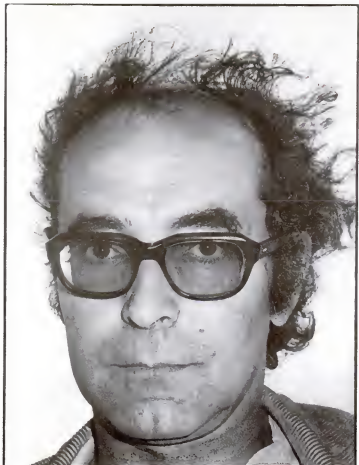
Hail Mary is a somber, contemporary retelling of the Virgin Mary's life. Granted, it's a bit off-beat—Mary is an off-mule gas station attendant who loves to shoot hoops, Joseph drives a cab, and "Uncle" Gabriel pops down via airplane. But the movie doesn't mock those who have faith or ridicule Catholicism à la Luis Buñuel. In fact, it's hard to imagine what the fuss is about. Godard doesn't understand either.

"I think it might be that the Church wants to keep the copyright of their story," he jokes. "But some people inside the Church, they used it for their inside political matters. They don't really care about the movie."

"The Vatican newspaper said, 'Pictures shall not deal with sacred things,' which is the Church opinion. I think it shouldn't be said so fast, but there is probably something important in that opinion. Sacred things are sacred. But as a moviemaker I ask: if they are sacred for the image but not for words, why you can't say the word 'sacred' and why you can't just shut up and show 'sacred.'"

Godard asked his Italian distributor to withdraw the film from Rome after the Pope's repudial, but I think the director might be enjoying the scandal. After all, he didn't mind the pie in the face ("it proves that I'm not a has-been"), and he's certainly pleased with the attention the public outcry has won. "I'm especially thankful to the Pope because he said what the movie is about," Godard says, grinning broadly. "With my other pictures, there've been a lot of people who said, 'What's that? What kind of story is that?'"

"Of course, a movie is always about something, but this time I feel it's more evident than ever. The story is known by everybody in a few words. It's like if an ancient painter was painting an angel and once and everybody knew it was an angel and before that, for 20 years people were saying, 'What's it about? What is



it? But this time it was evident at least that it was about an apple."

It's hard to fathom Godard telling me he never made movies to provoke and that it was a conscious move to use a familiar story so audiences could grasp the subject matter. Hard to imagine that this is the young truck whose first feature, *Breathless*, burst at the seams with energy; who made the wickedly funny *Alphaville* about private eye Lemmy Caution's adventures in a futuristic, computer-controlled metropolis.

But that was more than 20 years ago, when the French cinema's New Wave was still cresting. Today Godard is 55 years old; his unkempt hair is greying and thinning; and on the day we met he seemed tired. At times his statements were difficult to comprehend—perhaps because he was speaking English, his second language—or maybe, as he explained, it was just his "way of looking at things."

Hail Mary is a conventionally structured work compared to the fractured narratives of Godard's two previous films, *First Name: Carmen* and *Detective*. And the story of the Virgin is an odd choice for a man who never seemed to concern himself with religion. "Maybe at the time I was able to receive Mary's story and to transmit it," the director offers, as if he's guessing. "I prefer to say it that way. Maybe all my movies have dealt with couples—men and women—and I tried probably to go back to the archetypal couple. I'm always interested in the first

time. . . . In the beginning of movies, no: Griffith and Mack Sennett did not only do love stories. But today 99 percent of movies are love stories. So let's do the first love story ever told."

Godard looks contemporary men resemble Joseph because they must trust their lovers and allow them room. "I think woman can manage and live alone without man even if they are a little sad about it. But man without woman would be . . ." the director shrugs. "He needs woman and in another way he doesn't need them. There is something strange about man."

"I think as a moviemaker I'm more a woman. Of course, I'm a man as a director, but as a moviemaker, I'm more of a woman. It's like woman, receiving a signal—or semen—and then turning it into a human body. Well, I receive a signal and then I turn it out into an idea or a movie—after I nurture it with my subjectivity. It's more a woman's way of doing things."

"Men, they want to grab, to control. I don't want to control. There is war only because there are boys, only boys want to be soldiers. I was never interested in that. I was a citizen of two countries and in two countries I escaped the military service."

Godard has a habit of denouncing his earlier films. With his latest movies, which were heavily influenced by American action pictures, he attempted to inject new life into the slumbering French film industry. In the spring of 1968, spurred by

leftist student protests in Paris, Godard began making "revolutionary films for revolutionary audiences"—militant pictures sympathizing with such groups as the North Vietnamese, Palestinians, and black American radicals.

At that time, Godard renounced his pre-'68 work as "bourgeois crap." But by 1973 he left his political phase and started experimenting with videotape and its use in films. Since then he has made nine films, including the more commercial—for Godard—*Passion* and *Every Man for Himself*.

Of his dogmatic Marxist-Leninist films Godard says, "They weren't good at all as movies. It was interesting to try to bring

"I think as a moviemaker I'm more a woman. Of course, I'm a man as a director, but as a moviemaker I'm more of a woman."

movies in that direction, but they were not really good." He admits that they took themselves (and he took himself) too seriously. In retrospect, however, he finds their earnestness more funny than serious, which is precisely what he despises about *Rambo*.

"There is no humor in *Rambo*. This is what is dreadful," he says. "I mean, I would never—if I was an American moviemaker—I would never make a picture like *Rambo*. Those North Vietnamese people, they beat me, and it's difficult enough for them today after they beat me, because they are even weaker than they were. But it helped me in a way, so I shouldn't make a picture out of revenge. It's sickness. I should be glad and happy, and I was never happy. If I was an American moviemaker, Godard, probably I would have turned out a very happy Vietnam movie—the only very joyful, happy, full-of-slackest one."

These days, that's as political as Godard's discussions get. "Do politics play a big role in my life now?" he laughs as he repeats my question. "Well, if you mean the way the direction of traffic plays a big role when I'm crossing the street, yes, I'm just an ordinary citizen, complaining about things. I prefer to speak of movies and no more of politics or Vietnam. If I speak of Vietnam or Palestine, I will try to do some way through an interview. I've produced. Next to speak of Vietnam, but to speak of a documentary on Vietnam that I have seen. I can speak to you about Vietnam speaking of *Rambo*, but not about Vietnam in itself, which I have no opinion about. I can't."

Unlike Godard's politically involved films, *Hail Mary* doesn't beat the audience over the head with a message or lesson. It is more contemplative. "I wanted to do the story because I just wanted me to think about it. I think I represent some part of the audience—not all of the world, but some part of the world, yes—and if I want that, I think that some people in the audience will."

—Robert Seidenberg

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community service.

But after the sentencing, publicist Bryn Bridenthal said of the Crüe, "They don't want to be good boys by any stretch of the imagination."

The Crüe was back in business.

Nikki is the one the Crüe offers up for an interview. He's the founder, the most articulate, and at this stage the one least likely to get them in trouble with what he says. Though the outrageous stories surrounding the band belie it, he's just a normal guy with a marketing concept. The band's sound and image derive from the glam-rock of the early '70s—Kiss, Sweet, Aerosmith—sharpened by punk's aggression and engineered by Nikki. He speaks with the kind of cockiness high school kids aspire to. Nikki calls me from Duluth.

"I don't know where it is . . . Indiana, Minnesota," he says. "I hate that. I never know where I am 'til I look." Then he puts the phone down and goes away for a few minutes. "Sorry," he says when he gets back on. "I lost my drugs."

The Crüe's lawlessness is their livelihood, and the record of scandals stretches the entire length of their career. Some, like Vince's trial, are a matter of public record. Other wild tales are invented or distorted along the grapevine. I wanted to know if the pre-trial rumors were true, so I asked Nikki about one that appeared in 1982.

"There was something about you being in a fight in L.A. and bribing the arresting officer."

"God, yes. That's old. Me, Vince and another lady, and a girl I used to date, Lita Ford (from the Runaways), are walking out of the Rainbow Bar and Grange one night, and any way to even get my money, much less a car, we were walking down the street, heading for home. We used to live above the Whiskey-A-Go-Go. These bikers came up and kinda pushed a couple of the girls around."

"We said, 'Come on, lay off.' It was one of those biker vs. rocker things, which is kind of ridiculous. We're bikers in our own sense in parent's eyes. I had a belt with leather and chains wrapped around my waist. I took it off and I swung; we were getting in a fight. We were defending these girls."

"All of a sudden this undercover policeman comes, and I don't know that. All I can think about is protecting myself. The guy's undercover, he comes up, I crack him upside the head, he's a police officer. Alright Nikki, you did it again."

"Seven Billy clubs to the left of my eye later, I'm laying in jail. It's a pretty ugly situation. I had assault with a deadly weapon on a police officer as my charge—mandatory five years in prison. This police officer was pretty abusive to me. He did a lot of damage to my face at the time. It was like, he either broke the cages, or it was going to get ugly for him. From what I heard—I don't know if it's true—he had done that quite a few times to other people in that area. He had something against the kids."

"Everyone says that you're the architect of the band's image, its backbone. Is Mötley Crüe the band you envisioned when you were just starting out? Is it the band you wanted it to be?"

"Yes. Except that it'll keep getting better. Even in the early days in the clubs, we were always the biggest show. It was always the most comical to come and see us. People would always leave with a smile on their face. And the people backstage could always expect somewhat of a disastrous rock 'n' roll time. And I think that's everything we are now. Except that it's just exaggerated. It's going to keep getting sicker and sicker."

"Sicker?"

"Sick to me is like daily life. I could tell you stories that would make your skin crawl about things we've done and seen."

Mötley Crüe: (left to right) Mick Mars, Nikki Sixx, Vince Neil, and Tommy Lee—the gore that *Tipper* warned you about.



"Mötley Crüe is like an ongoing rumor. I just go . . . whatever. We're a rock 'n' roll band. We love the rock 'n' roll excess."

"Well, tell me."

"No way, I could tell you I got a new tattoo."

"Where is it?"

"It's on my crotch . . ."

"Would Mötley Crüe be any different if it happened 20 years from now?"

"After Mötley Crüe there will obviously be another bunch of boring, fuckin' old fart rock 'n' rollers around. Then there will be another rebellious young band coming up. Every time you turn the water cold, everyone goes 'Aaahh.' Then someone's gotta turn it hot just to feel how hot it is. If we're always the same we'll become boring. But as long as there's something boring going on it makes us the excitement. I'd like to thank all the Dire Straits and Oingo Boingo for making us rebels. Along with the PMRC. It'll continue to happen. The PMRC's very boring. We're not interested in their shit. We're bummed about being in the PMRC's Filthy 15—'cause we're No. 2, not No. 1."

"It is really just that it bores you?"

"I'm really bored with the whole subject. I think it's a bunch of shit and I don't think the kids really care. They're not going to be able to take the rock 'n' roll away from the kids."

"They didn't do their homework. They say, 'You guys are Devil worshippers.' I say, 'Would you please explain that.' They say we used a pentagram on our album, and that it's called *Shout at the Devil*. Yeah, shout at the Devil, not with the Devil. In the Bible the pentagram is mentioned as a good luck symbol, similar to a horseshoe. In the 1800s the English put the pentagram outside their pub doors because it would ward off werewolves or evil."

"I think perversion actually breeds in the PMRC's minds because they probably have very conservative, boring lives. Boring sex lives. They'd probably love nothing more than to get the shit fucked out of them.

They can't. Their husband comes home after talking bullshit politics all day and then rolls over and goes to sleep. Gets out of bed as quick as he can because he doesn't want his wife to jump him. There you go. That's my theory."

"[The accident] hasn't changed us. We're still the same. We do the exact same thing daily."

"People see Vince's accident as payment for being wild."

"So they're right. So Vince has to pay for it. Maybe out of a fuck up like that we can turn around and say to some kid, 'Don't you fuck up. Fuck, everybody is much fun if someone dies. And now let's get back on and let's rock 'n' roll, man.' That's what it's all about."

"What do you think the kids think? You see them everyday."

"They really never mention the accident. It's so far gone. If anything they say, 'How's Vince doing?' They all know it's settled, he's on parole. Fuck, everybody is on parole in this world in a sense, so what the hell?"

"Mötley Crüe is like an ongoing rumor. I just go . . . whatever. We're a rock 'n' roll band. We love the rock 'n' roll excess. And it's beautiful. Anybody that says that they wouldn't enjoy it is lying to themselves. It's the most exciting thing to happen since Christmas. You never really have to grow up. You really never have to make your own bed. You never ever have to worry about anything except rolling over and dialing room service and stumbling down to the hall and doing what you love to do best. That's playin' rock 'n' roll. Then you have food, drink, and the party backstage with all the beautiful ladies and meetin' fans and it's a gas, and then you're off to another city. You don't have the same people in your face and you can do it all over again. It's great. And then there's a side where you can turn around and be creative in it, actually have something to say."

"So it's the kind of life people would resent out of jealousy?"

"I believe that. Gypsies were never the most looked-up-to people. And that's basically what we are, aren't we?"

On November 1 the Crüe plays Chicago. Rumors are circulating backstage: "Vince Neil is on the phone with his wife . . . Tommy Lee is hot for Heather Locklear . . . This is the last show they're serving alcohol backstage . . . Lisa Hogan has taken a turn for the worse . . . Guitarist Mick Mars is divorced and has three kids . . . Vince's probation officer is here . . ."

Tipper Gore's Diary

Article by Jamie Malanowski

Dear Diary:

What a busy day! This morning I chaired another meeting of the Parents Music Resource Center Rock Archives Committee. Keeping sex and violence out of records and off videos was just our first goal—that was hard

enough! Expanding this filth from the vinyl annals of history is really a big job!

Last week, you'll remember, we banned "Work With Me, Annie" by the Midnighters, because it has lines like "Annie please don't cheat, give me all my meat." We also banned their "Sexy Ways," which has such lines as "Upside down, around around / Any old way, just pound, pound, pound." Hard to believe the man who wrote these songs also wrote "The Twist" (note to self: review Chubby Checker).

After that we listened to a song the Treniers recorded in 1952 called "Poon-tang!" I can't imagine what they thought they were getting away with! "I got a yen that I'm dyin' to please till I get weak in the knees / Gonna get me that poon-tang! Poon-tang, poon-tang, poon-tang!" How were these young men brought up? Of course we banned it. Then we banned "Cow Cow Boogie" by Ella Mae Mose, "Drinkin' Wine, Spo-Dee-O-Dee" by Stick McGhee, lots of stuff by Big Joe Turner, and this terrible record by the Dominos called "Sixty Minute Man" about some goof who boasts he can maintain the sex act for an hour. Isn't that a hoot! Who has the time?

Then we banned Jimmy Lloyd's "I Got a Rocket in My Pocket," the Invictas' "Do the Hump," Bullmoose Jackson's "Big Ten Inch Record," the Versatones' "Tight Skirt, Tight Sweater," the Toppers' "Baby, Let Me Bang Your Box," and the Elcards' "Peppermint Stick." That's the song where the words, "Peppermint Stick, eat my dick" keep being repeated. It's awful how that just sticks in your head.

We got rid of "Big Legged Woman" by Jerry Lee Lewis and "Can't Get Enough of That Stuff" by Julia Lee, which has all sorts of smutty lyrics such as "Julia always likes her men and whiskey straight." Then we tossed Gene Vincent's "Woman Love," with lines like "I'm lookin' for a woman with a one-track mind / A-luggin' and a-smookin' and a-smoochin' all the time." This was on the flip side of "Be-Bop-a-Lula," which is pretty fishy itself. Then we banned a bunch of songs by Wanda Jackson, like "Let's Have a Party,"

"Mean, Mean Man," and "Fujiuma Mama," in which she sings, "I been to Nagasaki, Hiroshima too! The things I did to them, baby, I can do to you / Cause I'm a Fujiuma Mama and I'm about to blow my top / And when I start erupin', ain't nobody gonna make me stop." Somebody said Wanda became a born-again Christian. I wonder if she still thinks that's enough.

We started off banning just "Good Golly, Miss Molly," "Tutti Frutti," and "Long Tall Sally" by Little Richard, but then we figured, the heck with it, let's ban everything he did. Similarly, we were just going to ban "Get Up, I Feel

Like Being a Sex Machine" by James Brown, but then we decided since he exudes such primal sexual energy, we ought to ban all his stuff. On that basis, we went everything by Wilson Pickett and Tina Turner, and on one member's heartrending testimony, Bobby Sherman. Then somebody mentioned that she heard Ioni Mitchell slept around a lot, so we chucked all her songs, too. All that work left us pretty tuckered out, but we knew we hadn't even scratched the surface,

to Touch Me," Queen's "Fat Bottomed Girls," and Bob Seger's "Night Moves." We banned Simon and Garfunkel's "Cecilia" because the title character engages in casual sex and Van Morrison's "Brown-Eyed Girl" because the boy and the girl make love behind the stadium.

We banned "Louie, Louie" by the Kingsmen. Yes, we know that when the song came out, the FCC investigated it for obscenity and found it "unintelligible at any speed." But that's



We discussed "Honky Tonk Women" and whether the line was "she blew my nose," which would be OK, or "she blew my hose," which would be something very different.

so we met bright and early this morning and really got to work.

We banned Lou Christie's "Rhapsody in the Rain" because the BBC banned it, and their word is good enough for us. We banned Ray Charles's "I Got a Woman" and a bunch of Chuck Berry songs like "Reelin' and Rockin'" and "My Ding-a-Ling," and "Wake Up, Little Susie" by the Everly Brothers, because we didn't buy their story that they were just sleeping (if you're that tired, go to bed. Don't tell me Susie, Phil, and Don all dozed off at the same second). We banned the Knack's "Good Girls Don't," Joan Jett's "Do You Want

After lunch, we banned Dylan's "Lay, Lady, Lay," Mel and Tim's "Backfield in Motion," "Hanky Panky" and "I Think We're Alone Now" by Tommy James and the Shondells, Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side," "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" by the Shirelles, Peter and Gordon's "Lady Godiva," Meat Loaf's "Paradise by the Dashboard Light" (this has certainly changed my opinion of Phil Rizzuto), "Lola" by the Kinks, and "This Girl is a Woman Now" by Gary Puckett and the Union Gap. We banned Billy Paul's "Knee Deep in Love" because it glorifies adultery. We banned the Commodores' "Three Times a Lady" (imagine that nice Lionel Richie being involved in something like that). We banned Lee Dorsey's "Ride Your Pony" because of the lines "Now get on your pony and ride. Now, shoot! Shoot!" Oh, I'd like to rub that smirk off that Dorsey man's face!

We had to ban Olivia Newton-John's "Physical," even though it's good aerobic music.

We also spent some time on "A Brand New Key" by Melanie. Frankly, I didn't see what was wrong with it. Then someone suggested that I should think of the key as Albert's p. and that I should think of myself as the roller skate, with a little hole where the key goes—well, say no more. The things these people try to pull!

We devoted the rest of the day to listening to everything by Aretha Franklin, Mitch Ryder, and the Rolling Stones. We had to ban nearly all of it. The stuff was either too juvenile or too mature. We had a big debate about how bad the phrase "sock it to me" could be, since President Nixon said it on Laugh-In. But then someone told us that her college roommate had a boyfriend who told her that "sock it to me" was what black men said to black women when they wanted to have sex, so we concluded, safe. Nixon was just trying to win black votes. We discussed "Honky Tonk Women," and whether the line was "she blew my nose," which would be OK, or "she blew my hose," which would be something very different. We just banded it all.

This is exhausting and sordid work, and sometimes I regret having taken it on. I would much rather be spending the afternoon at home, tending my rosebushes and catering to Albert's big contributors. But I am certain I am doing the right thing. Next week we are going to devote our whole session to the Captain and Tennille. I feel bad, because they seem like such nice people. He wears that funny hat and she sings the National Anthem at Dodger games and looks so wholesome. But they did record "Do That to Me One More Time" (you know—"Once is never enough with a man like you"). We're going to see if we can approve the song by coming up with a "that" that would fit the song, and not be the "that" that we really know it is.

Until next time,

T.

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